



NATIONAL UNITY

TWO

Perspective and Problems

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FOREWORD

Dedicated To The
Immortal soul of Indira Gandhi
who laid down her life on 31.10.84
so that the Ideal of Communal har-
mony remain alive.



FOREWORD

India's independence and democracy are now threatened by attacks on our National Integration. From Amritsar to Manipur, Pahelgaon to Cochin, de-stabilisers of all varieties.—religious, political, regional, linguistic and cultural,—are doing their bit to undermine the very foundation of our Democratic Republic. Often, they are resorting to violence. The secessionists in Punjab have now surpassed all time record of violence on innocent people for such ends, in the name of Sikh religion.

Fortunately for us, Calcutta has a pride of place in our commitment to Secular Democracy. On 21st February, 1986, Government, political parties and the people of Calcutta, sternly foiled a dirty attempt of few antisocials to start communal riot. Unfortunately that has not been adequately publicised by the media. We may not be above communal bias. Organised communal forces amongst Hindu, Muslim and even Sikhs are quite active and willing to demonstrate their strength. But the public in West Bengal in general and Calcutta in particular have not been passive spectators as in many other areas. In this battle, the Calcutta University National Integration Centre has been consistently playing its due role for nearly two decades against heavy odds. The present attempt to bring out a publication of the writings of prominent national

figures and of a few pieces of writings by historians would add to the powerful weaponry in the armoury of crusaders in the battle against communalism in particular and divisive forces in general. I hope that this publication, like the previous one, would be very useful to the text-book writers and the teaching community also, for demolishing sectarian and communal prejudices that permeate many of our history text-books.

S. K. Bhattacharyya

Vice Chancellor, Calcutta University

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"We do not think independence is merely having our own government. We feel independence means that we make our own decisions. There may be wrong decisions but these must be our decision Indian decision, keeping in view the future of India and not of helping some concern or the other".

Indira Gandhi



GANDHIJI AND COMMUNAL UNITY

Dr. Abid Husain

Soon after Gandhiji came back to India from South Africa and began his mission of peace and love for bringing about unity between all communities, with special emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity. he found that the greatest obstacle in the way of a lasting understanding and friendship between the Hindus and Muslims was the frequent occurrence of violent clashes between some sections of the two communities. He was distressed to see that every time he had, after years of hard and devoted work, achieved some measure of success in creating friendly relation between the bulk of Hindu and Muslim communities, a communal riot would break out in some part of the country in which some Hindus and Muslims fought and killed each other, with the result that the whole atmosphere would be poisoned, and a state of tension would prevail between the two communities almost throughout the country and much of love's labour would be lost. This led Gandhiji to think that the first and the most necessary step that had to be taken in order to clear the way for lasting peace and amity between the Hindus and the Muslims was to find out the causes that lead to Hindu-Muslim disunity and try to eliminate them.

We have seen that Gandhiji regarded mutual love and harmony between Hindus and Muslims in India a necessary condition for their being able to lead a healthy religious life. So it was

natural that violent clashes between the two communities should appear to him as symptoms of a spiritual malady which ought to be immediately checked if sanity of the religious spirit was to be preserved. When people committed murder and arson, looted houses and shops and even desecrated places of worship in the name of religion, it looked as if a canker was eating into and destroying the inner kernel of their religious faith, and what was left to them was nothing but the empty shell. If this state of things continued it would kill the true spirit of religions, which would mean the death of India. But even during the worst riots Gandhiji was optimistic enough to hope that the malady with which Hindus and Muslims seemed to be stricken in those dark days was not a permanent disease but a temporary distemper which would soon pass off and they would return to their normal health.

"If religion dies then India dies. Today Hindus and Muslims are clinging to the husk of religion. They have gone mad. But I hope this is all froth. The scum has come to the surface as happens when the waters of two rivers meet. Everything appears muddy on top ; but underneath it is crystal clear and calm. The scum goes to sea of itself and the rivers mingle and flow clear and pure "1

Gandhiji did not have the slightest doubt that those who take part in communal riots or instigate them by indulging in hymns of hate do no good to their own community. The feeling of hatred against the other community which they instil in the members of their own community poisons their minds, destroys all their finer feelings and drives them to fight and kill like brutes. And once hate takes possession of the mind it is not possible to restrict its scope or control its direction. People who begin with hating members of the other community may end with hating



and fighting and killing members of their own faith owing to differences in political, social or economic views, or clash of group interest or personal interest.

"The Hindu thinks that in quarrelling with the Mussalman he is benefiting Hinduism and the Mussalman thinks that in fighting a Hindu he is benefiting Islam. But each is ruining his faith. And the poison has spread among the members of the communities themselves. And no wonder, for one cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is doing wrong in another. Life is one and indivisible."²

But Gandhiji had found that the mutual hatred was neither a permanent state of Hindu-Muslim relations nor the primary cause of communal conflicts. The two communities had lived, on the whole, peacefully together for hundreds of years and continued to do so in the normal course of life. What is more they had in the pre-British period stood shoulder to shoulder to fight the Mongols and other invaders and in the fight for freedom from the British rule they had often joined hands as comrades in a common battle against a common enemy. It was only occasionally that they were thrown into the fit of madness that made them hate and fight each other :

"My experience of India tells me that Hindus and Muslims know how to live at peace among themselves. I refuse to believe that they have said good bye to their senses so as to make it impossible to live at peace with each other."³

But there must be something which disturbs the normal peaceful relations between Hindus and Muslims and induces the temporary fit of insanity, the abnormal feeling of hatred between the two communities, leading to violent clashes between them. According to Gandhiji's analysis it is mutual distrust born of fear

that lurks in the minds of members of both communities and comes out in the disguise of hatred every time it finds an occasion to do so. This hidden fear expressing itself in acts of cowardice by some members of the one or the other community—whenever there is a state of tension produced by some external factor—is the real, the primary cause of the riots because cowardice always invites and encourages violence:

"These cases have nothing to do with inveterate enmity between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Where there are fools, there are bound to be knaves, where there are cowards, there are bound to be bullies whether Hindus or Mussalmans."⁴

In another place, Gandhiji goes a little deeper into the psychology of fear as the real motive behind the extreme violence or terrorism which is a common feature of communal riots:

"The more I go about in these parts, the more I find that your worst enemy is fear. It eats into the vitals of the terror-stricken as well as the terrorist. The latter fears something is his victim. It may be his different religion or his riches that he fears."⁵ "We fly at each other's throats in cowardice and fear. The Hindu distrusts the Mussalman through cowardice and fear and the Mussalman distrusts the Hindu through equal cowardice and imaginary fears. Islam throughout history has stood for matchless bravery and peace. It can, therefore, be no matter for pride to the Mussalmans that they should fear the Hindus. Similarly, it can be no matter for pride to the Hindus that they fear the Mussalmans, even if they are aided by the Mussalmans of the world. Are we so fallen that we should be afraid of our own shadows?"⁶

There is a more specific reference to the feelings of

distrust and fear that the Hindu and the Muslim communities entertained towards each other before the partition of the country but to some extent the words apply to the state of affairs existing today:

"I know that there is much, too much distrust of one another yet. Many Hindus distrust the Mussalman's honesty. They believe that Swaraj means Mussalman Raj for they argue that without the British, the Mussalmans of India will aid Mussalman power to build a Mussalman Empire in India. The Mussalmans, on the other hand, fear that the Hindus, being in overwhelming majority, will smother them."

Those who have closely followed the course of Hindu-Muslim riots, will agree that Gandhiji, with his deep insight into the psychology of the Indian people, has succeeded in putting his finger on the real motive, among the many motives, the ultimate cause prior to the many immediate causes of these violent tussles. The trouble may start with the alleged or actual desecration of a place of worship, or a clash between processions (religious or non-religious) of two groups of people belonging to the Hindu and Muslim communities or even a personal quarrel between a Hindu and a Muslim. But it soon develops into a full-fledged communal riot, because the lurking fear in the minds of both the Hindus and the Muslims stirs their fancy into imagining all sorts of horrible acts that could be committed by the members of the other community. Consequently they are prepared to believe implicitly any rumour set afloat by a few interested persons or mere mischief-makers. This creates general panic, which drives some section of the one or the other community into aggression as the better part of defence. So a vicious circle of fear leading to violence and violence increasing

fear is formed. which. it seems. is almost impossible to break. But Gandhiji, who regarded the frequent violent conflicts as the greatest obstacles in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity (which was one of the most important objectives of his mission of Love) had to break this vicious circle at all costs. So he gave the cutting of the 'Gordian knot' of violent communal strife the highest priority in his experiments with Truth. He exerted all his energy, endured the most trying hardships, and even risked his life in putting down the devastating fire of a number of communal riots.

As we have seen, Gandhiji's search for the real cause of the Hindu-Muslim riots had revealed that mutual hatred between the two communities that seemed to lead to violent conflicts was only a momentary symptom, indicating that a chronic disease of the soul lying dormant within them had taken an acute form. This spiritual malady from which both communities suffered to a greater or lesser degree was distrust born of fear. The best remedy that he could, in consonance with his philosophy of life, suggest for this temporary insanity that gets hold of some sections of Hindus and Muslims and incites them to acts of violence against each other was to conquer fear. This could be done in one of the ways—the way of violence or that of non-violence.

"The Hindus, as also the Mussalmans, when one of them goes mad, have two courses open. Either to die valiantly without retaliation, that will at once arrest the progress of the mischief or to retaliate and live or die."*

The violent way is inferior in principle and ineffective in practice but still it is preferable to submitting to injustice or running away from danger out of cowardice.



"I want both the Hindus and the Muslims to cultivate the cool courage to die without killing. But if one has not the courage, I want him to cultivate the art of killing and being killed rather than in a cowardly way to flee from danger."⁹

But the violent way will only have a vestige of decency about it if the fight is carried on according to the common code of chivalry.

"It is a rule of honourable combat that after having heartily given and taken blows both parties quiet down and seek no reinforcement from outside. There should be no bitterness or feeling of revenge left behind.

"A quarrel should in no case be carried from one street to another. The fair sex, the aged, the children and all non-combatants should be free from molestation. Fighting would be regarded as sportsmanlike if these rules are observed."¹⁰

Gandhiji knew that fighting according to "honourable rules of combat" was only a hypothetical alternative to the superior non-violent way of removing fear, the real cause of communal riots, from the minds of the people and thus arresting the course of the riots. To expect people driven by the fury of communal madness to observe rules of chivalry in street fighting would be utterly unrealistic. Even if it were possible to convert large masses of people from undisciplined to disciplined violence he would much rather convert them to the disciplined non-violent way of resisting without killing or injuring the opponent, which is a far superior and the only effective way of checking communal disturbances and restoring inner peace in the minds of the people as well as outward peace in the disturbed area:

"If all the Hindus listened to my advice or in the alternative all the Mussalmans listened to me, there would be peace in India

which neither dagger nor lathis would be able to shatter. The mischief-maker would soon be weary of the sorry business of stabbing when there is no retaliation or counter-provocation. An unseen power will arrest his uplifted arm and it will refuse to obey his wicked will."¹¹

But as a practical idealist, Gandhiji realised that it would take a long time, perhaps ages, to teach all the people the lesson of non-violence. So while he urged all those who believed in non-violence to persist in the long-term plan of carrying on the message of non-violence to all the people of India, and of the whole world, he also suggested, as a short-term measure to meet the immediate need of checking all violent conflicts, specially the frequent Hindu-Muslim riots doing incalculable material, moral and spiritual damage to the whole country, that Peace Brigades should be formed by a selected number of Satyagrahis (staunch votaries of Truth and Ahimsa) who are specially qualified for the difficult task of restoring peace in the area disturbed by communal riots. The qualifications which he laid down for a member of the Peace Brigade and the practical directions he gave for the working of the organisation are as valuable today as they were in his lifetime. So it would be worthwhile to quote them here:

“(1) He or she must have a living faith in non-violence. That is impossible without a living faith in God. A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without that he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the omnipotence of God also means respect for the lives even of

those who may be called *goondas*. The contemplated intervention is a process of stilling the fury of man when the brute in him gets the mastery over him.

“(2) This messenger of peace must have equal regard for all the principal religions of the world.

“(3) Generally speaking the work of peace can be done by local men in their own localities.

“(4) The work can be done singly or in groups. Therefore, no one need wait for companions. Nevertheless, one would naturally seek companions in one's locality and form a local brigade.

“(5) This messenger of peace will cultivate through personal service contacts with the people in his locality or chosen circle, so that when he appears to deal with ugly situations, he does not descend upon the members of a riotous assembly as an utter stranger liable to be looked upon as a suspect or an unwelcome visitor.

“(6) Needless to say, a peace-bringer must have a character beyond reproach and must be known for his strict impartiality.

“(7) Generally, there are previous warnings of coming storms. If these are known, the Peace Brigade will not wait till the conflagration breaks out but will try to handle the situation in anticipation.

“(8) Whilst, if the movement spreads, it might be well if there are some wholetime workers, it is not absolutely necessary that there should be. The idea is to have as many good men and women as possible. These can be had only if the volunteers are drawn from those who are engaged in

various walks of life, but have leisure enough to cultivate friendly relations with the people living in their circle and otherwise possess the qualifications required of a member of the Peace Brigade.

“(9) There should be a distinctive dress worn by the members of the contemplated Peace Brigade so that, in course of time they will be recognized without the slightest difficulty.

“These are general suggestions. Each centre can work out its own constitution on the basis here suggested.”¹²

Useful as these suggestions are for those who have the will and the courage to undertake the extremely difficult and hazardous task of putting down the fire of communal strife in any part of the country, the most instructive and inspiring guidance that they could possibly have is embodied in the personal example of Gandhiji, whom we can safely call the greatest worker for peace in our time, if not of all time.

Here we shall briefly mention what Gandhiji expected of those ordinary people who do not have the capacity to act as members of a Peace Brigade but are anxious to do their bit in restoring peace and tranquility in places disturbed by communal riots. The least he would like them to do was to follow him in condemning those who were in any way responsible for or had taken part in communal rioting, irrespective of the fact that they were members of his own community or even his near relatives:

“It is my duty to tell them that they have done wrong. I have always applied this rule in life even with regard to my nearest and dearest. It is the test of true friendship.”¹³

Special responsibility lies on newspapers, as they exercise immense influence over the public mind. They should scrupu-

lously avoid publishing anything beyond bare facts, specially anything that excites inter-communal hatred, and even factual reports about communal riots should be carefully considered at the joint meeting of newspapers before publication :

"I am sorry that there is poison administered to the public by some newspapers. Newspapers today have almost replaced the Bible, the Koran, the Gita and other religious scriptures. I hold it the duty of newspapermen to give nothing but facts to their readers. They should appoint a joint Board to which all reports about communal trouble would be submitted and even passed on to the responsible ministers and when necessary given for publication."¹⁴

But withholding the names of parties to a communal clash as practised by our newspapers when reporting such clashes, sometimes with all their gruesome details, appears to Gandhiji to be not only quite senseless but even harmful, as it can lead to misunderstanding and sometimes may amount to misrepresentation. These words deserve to be seriously considered by newspapermen as well as by Press Advisers of the Government.

"I confess that the question (why, when mutual slaughter between brother and brother is going on, should the names of the respective communities be withheld) has often occurred to me. There seems to be no reason for this hush-hush policy save that it is a legacy from the autocracy... Those who ought not to know who stabs whom and those who ought to know, are kept in the dark. I am sure there are many Hindus and Muslims, and even members of other communities, taking pride in being Indians first and last without ceasing to be devoted followers of their own religions who love

to do their best to dissuade blind fanatics from making mischief. I know many such. They have no means of ascertaining facts exact through the Press. Let darkness be exposed to light. It will be dispelled quicker."¹⁵

Those public-spirited Hindus and Muslims who have some influence over members of both the communities, or at least over those of their own community, can make a more positive contribution in checking the riots and in alleviating the distress they have caused by establishing peace committees throughout the disturbed areas. Their functions are explained by Gandhiji with reference to such committees set up in Calcutta after the Hindu-Muslim riots in August, 1947 :

"The Central Peace Committee should consolidate results so far achieved. They have to see that poor Muslims are rehabilitated, just as the Hindus have to be rehabilitated in the areas from which they have been evacuated. Local Peace Committees should be set up in each *mohalla*; and they must find out at least one Hindu and one Muslim of clean heart to work together. Those Committees should tour the areas under their jurisdiction. They should work to create the feeling of friendliness wherever it is lacking. For the purpose of rehabilitation, they will have to go into details. Food, shelter and clothing have to be found for the evacuees returning to their homes.

Lastly, those who have, in a state of momentary madness, indulged in reprehensible acts during the communal disturbances, should atone for them by repentance and prayer and by bearing, with grace and dignity, the moral condemnation or the legal punishment meted out to them by society or by the Government:

"If some people have committed grievous mistakes in their dealings with their neighbours, they should repent and ask

their pardon of God. If He granted it but the world did not, even then it did not matter to a man who had learnt to depend on God; such punishment nobly borne serves to elevate a man."¹⁷

Gandhiji does not agree with those who think that in the interest of peace persons charged with acts of violence in communal conflicts should not be prosecuted. He asks:

“What has peace between gentlemen to do with the prosecution of criminals? I can understand the objection if it means that false prosecutions should be withdrawn.”¹⁸

No doubt the principles of non-violence do not envisage resort to law courts to settle any dispute. But they cannot and do not allow the believers in Ahimsa to “arrest the course of law” in the prosecution of criminals.

“The proper course to avoid court procedure is for guilty persons in all humility to make open confession of their guilt and stand the judgement of the public.”¹⁹

But once formal prosecution has been launched against them, Gandhiji would not interfere with it. On the contrary, if they are hiding themselves to avoid arrest, he would advise them to give themselves up :

“As a mark of repentance you (criminals) should surrender yourselves to the police and bear the punishment that may be meted out to you. Even otherwise it is in your interest to surrender, for if the Government and the police do their duty—which they must if they want to justify their existence—you will be arrested sooner or later. A voluntary surrender is bound to win you consideration from the court.”²⁰

Thus we find that Gandhiji did not treat the problem of violent conflicts between Hindus and Muslims as a mere political,



but as an essentially spiritual and moral, problem According to his analysis, it is cowardly fear a malady of the soul that causes these conflicts and nothing but self-sacrificing love on the part of a few persons of either community or both communities believing in Truth and Non-violence can effectively check them—by purging the hearts of all concerned of the acute distemper, mutual hatred born of the chronic disease, and mutual fear. Gandhiji himself set perfect example of the non-violent method in dealing successfully with a number of Hindu-Muslim riots. But he did much more. He pointed out the way to permanent unity between Hindus and Muslims that would make such violent clashes between them impossible.

SOURCES

1. W.C.H., p. 48
2. Ibid. p. 10
3. H., March 16, 1947
4. Y.I., September 18, 1924, p. 308
5. H., December 8, 1946, p. 442
6. Y.I. September 24, 1931, p. 273
7. Ibid., May 11, 1921, p. 148
8. Ibid., September 29, p. 307
9. Ibid., October 20, 1921, p. 335
10. Ibid., September 18, 1942 p. 312
11. H., April 8, 1946 p. 103
12. Ibid., June 18, 1938. p. 152
13. W.C.H., p. 202
14. Ibid , p. 203
15. Ibid., pp. 202-203
16. H., August 31, 1947, p. 2
17. Ibid., February 2, 1947, p. 3
18. H., February 23, 1947 p. 37
19. Ibid., February 23, 1947 p. 38
20. Ibid., June 1, 1947

THE UNITY OF INDIA

Jawaharlal Nehru

Most Americans, bred in the democratic tradition, sympathize with India's struggle for freedom. They dislike empire and imperialism and the domination and exploitation of one nation by another. And yet they are perplexed when they consider the Indian problem, wondering whether it is possible to build a united and progressive nation out of the seemingly infinite diversity that makes up the fabric of Indian life. They have heard so much of the separatist elements, of the conflicts of religion and culture, of the variety of languages, of the mediaeval conditions in the semi-feudal regions of the Indian States, of social cleavages, of the general backwardness of Indian life, that doubts assail them whether it is possible to harmonize all these in a free and independent India. Can democracy be built upon such insecure foundation ? Could India stand together and free if British rule were withdrawn ?

These hesitations and perplexities are natural. The questions in which they originate must be considered by us dispassionately, and we must attempt to find the right answers. Freedom for a nation and a people may be, and is, I believe, always good in the long run ; but in the final analysis freedom itself is a means to an end, that end being the raising of the people in question to higher levels and hence the general advancement of humanity. The vital and most important problem that faces us in India is the appalling poverty of the people. Will political independence help us to diminish this, as well as the numerous ills that flow from it ?

It is well to remember that the British have been in effective control of India for more than a hundred and fifty years and that during this period they have had almost complete freedom to act in any manner they chose. No democratic or any other kind of control in fact existed, the British Parliament being too far away and too ignorant to intervene. India was, and is, a rich country, rich in agricultural resources, mineral wealth, human material; only her people are poor. It was indeed the wealth of India that attracted hordes of foreign adventurers to her shores. With these resources and that human material, and following a century and a half of unchecked despotism, one is entitled to ask for substantial results. During this period Europe has changed out of recognition. Japan has transformed herself with amazing speed, America has become the wealthiest country in the world. But in India we still have grinding poverty, widespread illiteracy, a general absence of sanitation and medical relief—a lack, indeed, of all the good things of life. There are undoubtedly some good works which have followed British rule, notably in the field on irrigation. But how little they are compared to what might have been !

It is idle to blame the Indian people for this when those people have been allowed no say in the matter. The very backwardness of a people is condemnation of its government. With this patent result of British rule in India, little argument is needed to demonstrate its failure. But even admitting the failure, it is true that our present problems are no nearer solution. It nevertheless is well to bear the fact in mind, for the very structure of British imperialist rule has been, and is, such as to aggravate our problems and not to solve any of them. And because these problems insistently demand solution we have to look for it outside the orbit of the British Empire.



India is smaller than the United States of America, yet it is a vast country and its population is far larger than that of the United States. Our problems therefore are continental. They are unlike those of the small countries of Europe. Till the advent of modern communications and modern methods of transport, it was very difficult for such a vast area to hold together politically for long. The United States grew and developed into a powerful unit, despite the vast area involved, because of the increase in transport and communications. If the United States had had a long history, going back hundreds and thousands of years—before modern science and industry revolutionized life, probably the country would have been split up into many small national units, as happened in Europe. The fact that India was split up politically in the course of her long history was inevitable under the conditions then existing. Yet always the idea of the political unity of India persisted, and kings and emperors sought to realize it. Asoka indeed achieved unity two thousand years ago and built up an empire far greater than that of Britain in India today. It stretched right into Central Asia and included Afghanistan. Only a small part in South India remained outside, and this because of the horror of war and bloodshed that came over Asoka in the full flood of victory and conquest. Other rulers in the past tried to achieve the political unification of India and succeeded in some measure. But this desire for unified political control of the whole country could not be realized in view of the lack of means and machinery. The coming of the British to India synchronized with the development in transport, communications and modern industry, and so it was that British rule succeeded at last in establishing political unity.

The desire for political unity, in India as in other countries before the advent of nationalism, was usually the desire of the

ruler or the conqueror and not of the people as a whole. In India, where for long ages there had been a large measure of local self-government, the people were far more interested in their local freedom and rights than in the machinery of government at the top. Kings changed at the top, but the newcomers respected local rights and did not interfere with them. Because of this, conflicts between kings and people did not take place as in Europe ; and later, under cover of this, kings gradually built up their autocratic power.

An all-India political unity thus was not possible in the past. What is far more important for us is to see what other more basic unifying or separatist features there were in Indian life. This will help us to understand the present and shape the future. Superficial observers of India, accustomed to the standardization which modern industry has brought in the West, are apt to be impressed too much by the variety and diversity of India. They miss the unity of India; and yet the tremendous and fundamental fact of India is her essential unity throughout the ages. Indian history runs into thousands of years, and, of all modern nations, only China has such a continuous and ancient background of culture. Five to six thousand years ago the Indus Valley civilization flourished all over northern India and probably extended to the south also. Even then it was something highly developed, with millennia of growth behind it. Since that early dawn of history innumerable peoples, conquerors and settlers, pilgrims and students, have trekked into the Indian plains from the high lands of Asia and have influenced Indian life and culture and art; but always they have been absorbed and assimilated. India was changed by these contacts and yet she remained essentially her own old self. Like the ocean she received the tribute of a thousand rivers, and though she was disturbed



often enough, and storms raged over the surface of her waters, the sea continued to be the sea. It is astonishing to note how India continued successfully this process of assimilation and adaptation. It could only have done so if the idea of a fundamental unity were so deep-rooted as to be accepted even by the newcomer, and if her culture were flexible and adaptable to changing conditions.

Vincent Smith, in his "Oxford History of India,"² refers to what I have in mind : "India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners, and sect." And Sir Frederick Whyte, in "The Future of East and West,"³ also stresses this unity. He refers to the tremendous diversity of India and yet "the greatest of all the contradictions in India is that over this diversity is spread a greater unity, which is not immediately evident because it failed historically to find expression in any political cohesion to make the country one, but which is so greatly a reality, and so powerful, that even the Musulman world in India has to confess that it has been deeply affected by coming within its influence."

This Indian background and unity were essentially cultural; they were not religious in the narrow sense of the word. That culture was not exclusive or intolerant to begin with ; it was receptive and adaptable, and long ages of pre-eminence gave it deep roots and a solidarity which storms could not shake. It developed a beneficent attitude which, secure in its own strength, could afford to be tolerant and broadminded. And this very toleration gave it greater strength and adaptability.

There was in it till almost the beginning of the Christian era a certain rationalism, something approaching a scientific outlook, which refused to tie itself down to dogmas. True, this culture and rationalism were largely confined to the upper classes, but they percolated down to the masses to some extent. Superstitions and dogmas and many an evil practice gradually crept in. Buddhism was a revolt against these. But the old way of life was still powerful, and it is one of the wonders of history how India succeeded in absorbing Buddhism without any physical conflict. Buddhism, which had spread throughout India and had made progress from Western Asia right across Central Asia to the Far East, gradually faded out of the land of its birth. The man who is supposed to be largely responsible for this was Shankaracharya, who lived in the eighth century after Christ. This amazingly brilliant young man travelled all over India arguing, debating, convincing large audiences, and in a few years (he died at the age of 32) changed the mental atmosphere of the country. The appeal was to reason and logic, not to force.

This practice of debate and conference over religious and other matters was common throughout India and there are records of many great gatherings from Kashmir in the north to the far south. Whatever the political divisions of the country, ideas spread rapidly and were hotly debated. India hung together culturally and the mental background of the people everywhere was much the same. Even the masses in different parts of the country were not dissimilar in thought and outlook. The chief places of pilgrimage fixed by Shankaracharya were situated at the four corners of India : Badrinath in the Himalayas in the north, Rameshwaram near Cape Comorin in the south, Dwarka in the west overlooking the Arabian Sea, and Puri in the east, washed



by the waters of the Bay of Bengal. There was continuous intercourse between the peoples of the different regions. India as a whole was their holy land.

It is interesting to compare the intolerance of Europe in matters religious to the wide tolerance prevailing almost throughout history in India. Christianity came to India in the first century after Christ, long before Europe knew much about it, and found a welcome and a home. There was no opposition whatever. Even now there flourish in India many early Christian sects which were crushed out of existence in Europe. There are the Nestorians, and various Syrian Christian sects. The Jews came to India also about eighteen hundred years ago⁴ or more, and were welcomed. They still carry on their community life and parts of an ancient city where they live are supposed to resemble old Jerusalem. The Zoroastrians also came to India, driven out of Persia, and made their home here, and have flourished ever since. The Moslems first came soon after the advent of Islam and they found ready admittance and welcome and full opportunities for propagating their faith. For centuries there was no conflict except on the frontiers, it was only when Moslems came as conquerors and raiders that there was conflict.

The coming of Moslem rule shook India. For a while there was a conflict between the old background and the new, but soon the old spirit of India began to assert itself and attempts began to be made to find a synthesis of the old and the new. Even in religion, most difficult subject of all, this attempt was repeatedly made by Nanak⁵, Kabir and others. The Moslem rulers generally accepted the background of Indian life and culture, varied by Persian cultural ideas. There was no difficulty whatever in the adaptation of old Indian arts to new ideas. New styles grew up in architecture and painting which were a true

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synthesis of the two and yet were essentially Indian. So also in music. Even in dress a certain uniformity crept in, and a common language developed.

Thus the whole history of India for thousands of years past shows her essential unity and the vitality and adaptability of her culture. This vitality took her message in art and thought and religion to the Far East; it took the shape of great colonizing expeditions to Malaysia, to Java and Sumatra and the Philippines and Borneo, as the remains of great monuments there, a thousand years old, bear testimony.

Behind this cultural unity, and giving strength to it, was the ceaseless attempt to find a harmony between the inner man and his outer environment. To some extent this was the outlook of the Middle Ages in Europe. And yet it probably was something more. The profit motive was not so obvious and riches were not valued in the same way as elsewhere. Unlike as in Europe, honour was reserved for the man of intellect and the man who served the state or society, and the great soldier or the rich man took second and third place. Perhaps it was this want of stress by the outer environment that made India politically weak and backward, while external progress went forward so rapidly in the west.

The past record of Indian cultural solidarity does not necessarily help us today. It is present conditions that we have to deal with, and memories of what has been may be of little avail. But though that is perfectly true, yet an ancient people has deep roots in the past and we cannot ignore them. But the good and the bad that we possess have sprung from those roots; they give us strength and inspiration; they also burden us and tie us down to many a harmful tradition and evil practice. India undoubtedly deteriorated and the vital urge in her began to lessen. Her power



to assimilate and absorb became feebler, and the flexibility of her thought and structure gave place to rigidity. What was dynamic became more and more static. The rationalism and the scientific basis of her thought continued for a favoured few, but for others irrationalism and superstition held sway by occupation, and which at the start was far from rigid, developed a fearful rigidity and became the citadel of social reaction and a basis for the exploitation of the masses. For a long time India stagnated, the strength had gone out of her, and it was inevitable that she should fall an easy prey to the better-equipped and more vital and technically advanced nations of the West.

The immediate result of this was the growth of conservatism, a further shrinking of India inside her shell in self-defence. British rule forwarded this process by crystallizing many a changing custom and giving it the force of law. Even more important in keeping India back was the economic structure which British rule built up. The feudal Indian State system, and gilded Maharajas and Nabobs, and the big landlord system were essentially British creations in India. We have them, to our misfortune, still with us. But this desire of the British rulers to keep a semi-feudal structure in India could not hold back the impact of new ideas and new conditions. The British themselves thrived in the East on the strength of the great impulse given to the world by the advent of industrialism, and India herself was inevitably affected by this impulse. For their own purposes and in order to entrench themselves, they built railways and the other accompaniments of a modern administration. They tried hard to stop the industrial growth of India, desiring to keep her as a producer of raw materials only and a consumer of British manufactured goods. But the industrial revolution had to spread to India, even though it came slowly because of the obstruction offered by the

Government.

The British gave political unity to India. This had now become possible owing to the development of communication and transport. It was a unity of a common subjection, but it gave rise to the unity of common nationalism. The idea of a united and a free India gripped the people. It was not a superficial idea imposed from above, but the natural outcome of that fundamental unity which had been the background of Indian life for thousands of years. The difference that had crept in was the new emphasis on the political aspect. To combat this, the British Government tried to lay stress on religious differences and adopted a policy which encouraged them and brought them into conflict with each other. It has had a measure of success, but nationalism, in India as in other countries of the East, is the dominant urge of the time and must triumph. This nationalism is being tempered today by the economic urge, but this is still further removed from the mediaeval outlook which thinks in terms of religious groupings in political affairs.

The growth of powerful nationalist movement in India, represented by the National Congress, has demonstrated the political unity of India. The last two decades have seen vast upheavals, in the nature of a peaceful rebellion, taking place throughout the length and breadth of the country and shaking the foundations of British rule. This voluntary organization, commanding the willing allegiance of millions, has played a great role in fixing the idea of Indian unity in the minds of our masses. The capacity for united action and disciplined sacrifice for a national ideal which the people have shown has demonstrated not only the probability of Indian unity but its actual existence. In India today no one, whatever his political views or religious persuasions, thinks in terms other than those of national unity.



There are differences, of course, and certain separatist tendencies, but even these do not oppose national freedom or unity. They seek to gain a special favour for their particular group and because of this they hinder sometimes the growth of the nationalist movement. Religious differences affect politics less and less, though still sometimes they distract attention. There is no religious or cultural problem in India. What is called the religious or communal problem is really a dispute among upper class people for a division of the spoils of office or of representation in a legislature. This will surely be settled amicably wherever it arises.

Language is alleged to divide India into innumerable compartments; we are told by the census that there are 222 languages or dialects in India. I suppose the census of the United States mentions a very large number of languages; the German census, I think, mentions over sixty. But most of these languages are spoken by small groups of people, or are dialects. In India, the absence of mass education has fostered the growth of dialects. As a matter of fact, India is a singularly unified area so far as languages are concerned. Altogether in the vast area of India there are a dozen languages and these are closely allied to each other. They fall into two groups—the Indo-Aryan languages of the north and centre and west, and the Dravidian languages of the east and south. The Indo-Aryan languages derive from Sanskrit and anyone who knows one of them finds it easy to learn another. The Dravidian languages are different, but each one of them contains fifty percent or more words from the Sanskrit. The dominant language in India is Hindustani (Hindi or Urdu) which is already spoken by a huge block of a hundred and twenty million people and is partly understood by scores of millions of others. This language is bound to become the all-

India medium of communication, not displacing the great provincial languages, but as a compulsory second language. With mass education on behalf of the state this will not be difficult. Already due to talkies and the radio the range of Hindustani is spreading fast. The writer of this article has had occasion to address great mass audiences all over India and almost always, except in the south, he has used Hindustani and been understood. However numerous the difficult problems which India has to solve, the language problem clearly is not one of them. It already is well on the way to solution.

It will thus be seen that the forces working for Indian unity are formidable and overwhelming, and it is difficult to conceive of any separatist tendency which can break up this unity. Some of the major Indian princes might represent such a tendency; but they flourish not from their own inherent strength, but because of the support of the British power. When that support goes, they will have to surrender to the wishes of their own people, among whom the sentiment of national unity is widespread.

This does not mean that our problems are easy of solution. They are very difficult, as every major problem in the world to-day is difficult, and probably their solution will depend on international as well as on national factors. But the real problems of India, as of the rest of the world, are economic, and they are so interrelated that it is hardly possible to tackle them separately. The land problem is the outstanding question of India and any final solution of it is difficult to see without revolutionary changes in our agriculture and land system. Feudal relics and the big landlord system are hindrances to development and will have to go. The tiny holdings, averaging a fraction of an acre per person are uneconomic and wasteful and too small for the appli-



cation of scientific methods of agriculture. Large-scale state and collective or cooperative farms must be established instead, and this cannot be done so long as the vested interests in land are not removed. Even when this has been done the vast urban and rural unemployment will not be reduced. For that as well as for other obvious reasons we must push forward the industrialization of the country. This again requires the development of social services—education, sanitation, etc. And so the problem becomes a vast and many-sided one affecting land, industry and all departments of life and we see that it can be tackled only on a nationally planned basis without vested interests to obstruct the planning. Therefore many of us think that a socialist structure is necessary, that in no other way can such planning be organized and pushed through.

But then the vested interests come in—here lies the real difficulty and the real conflict. Far the greatest of these is the City of London, representing British finance and industry. The Government of India is but its shadow when vital interests are concerned. In addition there are the imperial services and Indian vested interests, the princes and others. The new Constitution of India,⁶ though giving a certain leverage in the provinces owing to the extension of the electorate, is essentially designed to protect these special interests and keep British imperialism in India intact. Even in the provinces real power rests with the Governors and the revenues are largely mortgaged to these interests. Such strength as there is behind the provincial governments comes far more from the organized national movement than from the Constitution Act. Fear of conflict with this movement, resulting possibly in the suspension of the Constitution, prevents too much interference with the provincial governments. But the position is essentially unstable; conflicts are inherent in



it. Besides, under the financial provisions and reservations really big schemes of social reform simply cannot be undertaken.

But by far the worst part of the Constitution is the proposed Federal structure, for it makes the feudal Indian States permanent and, in addition, gives them some power to interfere in the affairs of the rest of India. The whole conception of a union of imperialism, feudalism and democracy is incapable of realization and can only mean the entrenchment of all the reactionary elements. It must be remembered that the Indian State system is over a hundred years old and that during this century it has continued more or less unchanged. In this period Europe and the world have altered past recognition, and it is a monstrous imposition on us that we should be saddled permanently with feudal relics which prevent all growth. Hence the fierce opposition to the Federal structure and the Constitution Act as a whole.

The National Congress stands for independence and a democratic state. It has proposed that the constitution of a free India must be framed, without outside interference, by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of an adult franchise. That is the democratic way and there is no other way short of revolution which can bring the needed result. An Assembly so elected will represent the people as a whole and will be far more interested in the economic and social problems of the masses than in the petty communal issues which affect small groups. Thus it will solve without much difficulty the communal and other like problems. It will not solve so easily the economic problems, but the clash of interest there is similar to that found all over the world. In the world-wide conflict of ideas and politics, India stands for democracy and against Fascism and the totalitarian state. She stands for peace and cooperation between nations and ultimately the building up of a world order.



Will an independent India be strong enough to protect herself from outside aggression and invasion ? If India is strong enough to gain her freedom from British imperialism, which has so long been entrenched on her soil, it seems to follow that she will also be strong enough to resist fresh aggression. The strength of a nation is a relative affair' depending on a host of internal and external factors. Most independent countries today are not strong enough to stop by themselves the aggression of a great power. Even a great power might succumb to a combination of other Great Powers. Probably the United States is the only country so fortunately situated and so strong in every way as to be able to hope to resist successfully almost any hostile combination. The others rely for their independence partly on their own strength, but more so on a combination of circumstances.

India will, of course, take all necessary steps to strengthen her defences. For this she has the industrial and other necessary resources. Her policy will be one of friendship to her neighbours and others, and she will rigorously avoid conflict. The National Congress has already declared that in the event of Britain being involved in an imperialist war, India will not be a party to it. There is no doubt that India can build up a strong defence apparatus. Her army today, though lacking in Indian officers, is considered an efficient force.

Who might be the aggressor against India ? It is hardly likely that any European nation will embark on so rash an adventure, for each country in Europe fears its European neighbour. Soviet Russia is definitely out of the picture so far as aggression goes, she requires a policy of international peace, and the acquisition of Indian territory would fulfil no want of hers. Afghanistan and the border tribes also need not be considered





in this connection Our policy towards them will be one of close friendship and cooperation, utterly unlike the " Forward Policy " of the British, which relies on bombing combatants and non-combatants alike. But even if these peoples were hostile and aggressive they are too backward industrially to meet a modern army outside their own mountains.

Japan is mentioned as a possible aggressor. It is said that militarists in Japan dream of Asiatic and even world dominion. Perhaps so. But before they can approach India they will have to crush and absorb the whole of China, an undertaking which most people think is utterly beyond their capacity, and one which will involve at some stage a conflict with other Great Powers. How can Japan come to India ? Not overland. Deserts and the Himalayas offer an effective barrier, and not even air fleets can come that way. By sea the route is long and intricate and full of danger in the narrow straits that have to be passed. A Japanese invasion of India could become a practical proposition only in China has been completely crushed, and if the United States, the Soviet Union and England have all been effectively humbled. That is a large undertaking.

Thus we see that, normally speaking, there is no great or obvious danger of the invasion of India from without. Still, we live in an abnormal world, full of wars and aggression. International law has ceased to be, treaties and undertakings have no value, gangsterism prevails unabashed among the nations. We realise that anything may happen in this epoch of revolution and wars, and that the only thing to be done to protect ourselves is to rely on our own strength at the same time that we pursue consciously a policy of peace. Risks have to be taken whatever the path we follow. These we are prepared to take, for we must.

We do not underestimate the difficulties before us. We have a hard task, hard because of external opposition, harder still because of our own weakness. It is always more difficult to fight one's own failings than the power of an adversary. We have to do both. We have social evils, with the authority to long tradition and habit behind them. We have within us the elements which have gone to build up Fascism in other countries. We have inertia and a tame submission to fate and its decrees. But we have also a new awakening of the vital spirit of India. The static uncreative period is over, a hunger for change and for the ending of misery and poverty has seized the masses. The world is shaken by war and alarms of war. No one knows what horror and inhuman cruelty and destruction—or human progress—the future holds for us. Be that as it may, India will no longer be merely a passive instrument of destiny or of another's will.

In the subconscious mind of India there is questioning, a struggle, a crisis. As of old, India seeks a synthesis of the past and the present, of the old and the new. She sees the new industrial civilization marching irresistibly on ; she distrusts it and dislikes it to some extent, for it is an attack against and an upheaval of so much that is old ; yet she has accepted that industrial civilization as an inevitable development. So she seeks to synthesize it with her own fundamental conceptions, to find a harmony between the inner man and his everchanging outer environment. That harmony is strangely lacking in the whole world today. All of us seek it blindly. Till we find it we shall have to march wearily through the deserts of conflict and hatred and mutual destruction.



RESOURCES

1. This essay originally appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, U. S. A , January 1938. It presents a sensitive appreciation of the diverse elements which make up India unity.
 2. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1919.
 3. London : Sidgwick, 1932.
 4. The Jews in India are descended from arrivals in the country at different periods. The most ancient Jewish families claim descent from twelve Jewish families that are said to have been shipwrecked on the Indian coast in the fourth century before the Christian era.
 5. Guru Nanak founded the Sikh religion.
 6. The Constitution is embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, passed by the British Parliament. It does not carry the consent of the Indian people and was imposed on India in face of national opposition. The Constitution has become operative only in the provinces. The introduction of the Federal Central structure with its highly objectionable features has been successfully resisted by the Indian National movement up till now.
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INDIA'S CULTURAL TRADITION

Indira Gandhi

Prof. Buultjens, distinguished guests on the dais and in front of me:

It is an honour to be presented this Award and also to have such an eminent and distinguished gathering to witness the occasion. It is appropriate that this Award is named after U Thant. How well I remember him—so gentle in manner, so firm in his convictions and dedication to some of the causes I hold dear. And, if I may add, with a very fine sense of humour.

The Award symbolizes the theme of U Thant's life and work. U Thant believed, as Prof. Buultjens has said, and as we do, that politics can change, people come and go, but cultural ties endure bridging difference. Where I differ from Prof. Buultjens is that I do not think that politics and culture are two separate things. I think that culture must permeate all aspects of our daily lives and our daily work. Only then can it have meaning. You cannot switch it off and on and say work from 9 to 5, culture from 5 to 9. Culture is a way of life and a point of view.

The culture, the philosophy and the traditional values of the countries of Asia have sustained their peoples through century of oppression, have kept alive faith given them an insight which is now being rediscovered by scientists and others in the West. We are all part of this universe, yet the universe is contained within each one of us. We are the actors and at the same time we are the spectators. Many westerners have thought of Indian philosophy as advocating inaction and retreat. Actually it is the very opposite. It accepts change and challenge. To shun action is considered to be cowardice. But it does enjoin upon us to have



an inner core of calm, no matter how stormy the struggle or frantic the action. That is the meaning of Yoga also. Yoga is discipline. physical, mental and spiritual. Meditation is not something that we learn through lessons. It is an attitude of mind. It is something that can be with you in the midst of your work, in the midst of crowds. You don't need mantras—you don't even need solitude for it.

The Dhamma pada, the book of Buddha's saying, says : " Call him wise whose mind is calm, whose senses are controlled, who is unaffected by good and evil, who is wakeful." The Gita gives the same massage of equanimity in pleasure or pain. It also says, and this is its main theme : " Be concerned with action but not with its fruit." That is what I have accepted as the guide in my own life and in my own work.

The Buddha told his disciple Ananda, " Be an island unto yourself." The Pali word '*deep*' can mean either island or light. I don't think the Buddha meant isolation from others. But as many others after him, including Jean-Paul Sartre, has said, in the ultimate analysis, one has to depend on one's self. Our own poet Kabir sang in the people's dialect that we could look for truth anywhere and everywhere but we would find it only within ourselves. The search for it may be a lonely one, Yet we cannot abandon it for the sake of company or comfort. " Walk Alone " is one of my favourite Tagore poems in which he sings : " When there is darkness all around, you yourself become the lamp". Lamps beckon to others and islands are linked by the oceans.

The message of the Buddha spread farther to the East. It gave inspiration to and exerted a powerful influence to Eastern societies. Yet, each country adapted it in its own special way and contributed richly to the understanding of the Buddha's tea-



chings. In India, for a period, the Buddha's message seemed to be submerged in orthodox Hinduism. But the essence of it became part of our thinking. The serene countenance of the Mathura Buddha presides over our own most prestigious ceremonies in the Darbar Hall of our President's residence. My father found comfort in his teaching and kept a photograph of the Anuradhapura Buddha by his bedside.

Yet another saying often quoted, comes from our Upanishads—"Truth is one but seen as many." That is the basis of our Indian tradition of tolerance which lead to non-violence. India has had a remarkable capacity for assimilation and adaptation. It has shown a new concept. It has come from ancient times and three names stand out, although they are not the only ones. The first is Emperor Ashoka, who lived in the third century B.C. Many of you probably know his story. Like all emperors of the time and much later he believed in conquering territories. His last war—the war on the area which is now called Orissa and earlier Kalinga, was the bloodiest of them all. It left bloodshed and destruction and many widows and orphans. His own sister went to him and said, "What have you gained? You have some more land. What are you going to do with that land? And can that land compensate for the tears and aches of all these widows and orphans and the hatred and bitterness that you have brought in their hearts?" This affected him deeply and he vowed immediately that he would never again wage war. But he didn't stop there. He went a step further and all over what was then his vast empire, and it was indeed a very large territory, you will today find his edicts carved on the rocks or pillars, asking people to have concern and care for their fellow human beings, for all living creatures, for even the earth. He spread the Buddha's message of non-violence and love.

Long afterwards, in the sixteenth century, came an emperor of another faith—the Emperor Akbar. He didn't probably believe in non-violence, but he did believe in tolerance. He did believe in a synthesis of ideas, in welcoming the cultures of all different sections of the people in our country or outside. Whether in his army, in his court, amongst his musicians and writers and so on, he had people of all parts. He welcomed them and spread the message of tolerance, of acceptance and assimilation of good ideas wherever they may be found. He worked for harmony among the people of different faith.

And then came, in our own times, Mahatma Gandhi. Most religions do preach love, non-violence and tolerance. It was Mahatma Gandhi's genius which took these and forged out of them a political tool. This was the instrument with which we fought for independence and gained it, contrary to all prophecies and, I must confess, sometimes our own doubts. My father was his disciple as well as a person who was very independent in his thinking. Mahatma Gandhi had also lived in England and he had imbibed many western ideas which he tried to adopt to the Indian scene. And my father, perhaps, even more so. But at root, or in his essence, he was deeply Indian. However, he accepted the heritage of world culture as his heritage. He didn't say : this happened in Europe and so it is the heritage for the Europeans, and this happened in the East, and therefore it is Eastern. He believed that anything, any achievement of mankind, whether in the cultural field, in the spiritual or religious field, or in the scientific field, was something which belonged to all human beings. And all of us were the inheritors and all of us should make use of it. He was a universal citizen blending the best in the cultures of the East and the West, and he spoke in his public speeches about the need to combine science and spirituality. I must

say that this was not an original concept, because in our country Vinoba Bhave was the first to mention it.

Our freedom movement was one of national re-discovery as well as cultural and spiritual renaissance. We chose democracy, which means tolerance within the country. And we chose non-alignment, because it means tolerance internationally. Today this is the major problem before the world. We seem to be facing vast dangers. Many people think that the old values, cultural and other, are disintegrating. Many things that we loved are disappearing. And it seems strange that it should happen at a time when human beings themselves are reaching far higher levels of excellence. There have always been saints, artists, musicians and others who had reached the peak. But for the first time these opportunities are opening out to the ordinary man and woman. And many have gone a long way on the road of endeavour and achievement. So it seems strange that at a moment when these opportunities are there, this awakening is there, so much seems to be going wrong. U Thant realised this and in many of our conversations he stressed this very point—the responsibility of the ordinary citizen, not only to act according to his or her conviction but to try and spread the message to others so that the voice of peace, the voice of harmony, the voice of non-violence would be heard. I should like to add that when Mahatma Gandhi spoke of non-violence, he did not mean just not having weapons or hitting somebody. He meant non-violence in words and even in thought, apart from action.

In our independence struggle we were taught to love the British. We were being oppressed by them, but Mahatma Gandhi said our fight was not with the British people, it was with the system of imperialism. We were fighting that system, no matter where it existed or who used it. There was no quarrel



with the people of Britain. So despite our hardship and suffering and sacrifice and even at the height of our independence movement, Europeans or Britishers, could walk through the bazaars or anywhere without a hair of their head being touched. There were some murders, of course, but they were done by very small terrorist groups. They were courageous young people, but we thought them misguided. I think had we followed their methods, perhaps we wouldn't still be free. But our path was one of trying to understand even those who were oppressing us.

Prof. Buultjens started off by saying a lot of nice things about me. I have habit, which may be good or bad, I don't know. When words like this, which I don't really think belong to me nor apply to me, are said, I have a habit of just not listening. I just put them away. Life is too complicated—there are too many things which you must have in your head—that such things are best forgotten. He also said that much had been written about me. I differ. Many words have been written. But they have been written about some person ... Where have those people met her? Will she be discovered or not? I don't know. I really don't care. What is important is that that person is there and that person exists. This has nothing to do with being Prime Minister. It has nothing to do with being in power or out, having a victory or a defeat. The person that is in the core of each one of us welcomes every experience and tries to use that experience for inner strength, to build up inner resources, to build up inner calm, which I think is the message of most religions.

I have not spoken about culture, Prof. Buultjens, because as I said, I consider all these things to be part of culture. I find great pleasure in good art, in good music and other such activities. And even in our folk art, artisanship, entertainment. But

in the olden days, these were not separate. The people who danced or earned were also farmers. Beauty was part of their lives, of everything they did. Many of the beautiful objects which you see in the museums or in antique shops were not made for decoration. Either they were objects of religious faith, expressing their spirit of worship, or they were part of daily living and had some very practical everyday use. This is what we have to do now: integrate culture within ourselves so it enriches all of our lives.

I should like to end with a plea which is not mine. It is by U Thant himself. He urged: "I am making this plea; a plea based on these ten years of looking at the human condition from my unique vantage point, for a dual allegiance. This implies an open acceptance of belonging, as in fact we all do, to the human race as well as to our local community or nation. I even believe that the mark of the truly educated and imaginative person facing the twenty-first century is that he feels himself to be a planetary citizen".

What is needed today is what the poet MacLeish described as the regeneration of the feeling life of the mind. The consciousness of the oneness and wholeness of the world is, I am glad to say, being increasingly felt. All problems are interrelated. If you view or try to resolve this in isolation, the picture will be a distorted one, and no enduring or satisfactory solution will be possible. That is why we must look beyond the here and now and concern ourselves with the larger issues, the aches of others and the effect of our actions on generations to come.

Some of the members of the Award Committee are old friends who share the values in which I, and I hope all of us, believe. May I once more thank you and the Committee for the honour done to me ?.



NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Indira Gandhi

We have assembled here for a very important meeting. I am grateful to you all for coming. Obviously, the composition of such a gathering cannot be perfect. Many good people who have the right views and are secular in their working and in their thinking, have been left out. We can consider how to involve them in our work as we go along. The whole point of this meeting is not that we should just meet here but that we should evolve something. And I am not giving guidelines. We have come here to get your views on these matters. We could decide whether there should be some standing committees or other such methods by which our work can be continuous, and we can keep in touch with what is happening and give guidance to the public.

Some of our friends are not with us because of ill health or other valid reasons, but some have deliberately kept out. I can only hope that they will reconsider their stand.

An occasion such as this is one for national stock taking. We should not limit our discussions to the events only of the last few weeks or months.

Our concern is what kind of India shall we bequeath to future generations—a strong, harmonious, self-confident India or a feuding, weak, schizophrenic India. We talk of national integration. It is not a mere phrase but an awareness of the burden and task that history has placed on our shoulders. I have no doubt that all of us, whatever our party or political creed, hold the freedom and integrity of our country as supreme and dear above all else. But freedom and unity cannot be taken for gra-

nted. Eternal vigilance is the price of our integrity, as it is of all liberties.

Foreign Interference

We are living today in an era of particular turmoil. This takes all kinds of different forms in different parts of the world. There are wars; there are internal upheavals; there is political and spiritual disquiet, and dissatisfaction with creeds and easy formulations. It is also an age of the use of political interference as a substitute for open warfare.

Forces are at work in the world which are exploiting and will exploit any weakness on our part, especially at a moment like this. In many countries divisive groups receive support from outside agencies and sources. I am often asked to name the foreign interests who are interfering. It is not always possible to lay your finger on such groups or individuals. It is extremely difficult here or elsewhere. But time and again, years later, evidence has come up which has shown what kind of interference or attempted interference there has been.

I am not suggesting for one moment that our communal or caste troubles and linguistic movements are being instigated by outsiders. Neither I nor the Home Minister have blamed outside forces for the Muradabad, Aligarh and other incidents, although some papers and groups keep repeating that I have said so. But I have no doubt that any civil disturbance will weaken India and there will be groups who will take advantage of such weaknesses and such difference for their own purposes.

Underlying Factors

Most riots are provoked by a handful of persons or perhaps by a single person, but because of the prevailing atmosphere of

distrust and prejudice, because of the persistence of narrow loyalties of caste, of religion and of language, personal quarrels can soon be transformed into group clashes and assume a communal colour. This is what happened in Muradabad. A Court of Inquiry is going into the series of events there and it would not be right to speak of the precise causes. But when the situation is inflammable, it is not the person who strikes the match who can alone be held culpable, but the whole lot who put the combustible material there.

Whether it be Moradabad or Tripura, events move at a fast tempo. Riots are becoming more brutal and lethal. We should, of course, diagnose the causes but long exercises and analyses are not always very helpful. The Reports of the Enquiry Commissions come so long after the events that they have no utility except in the sense that every one is supposed to learn from history. In medicine, many cures have been found before the causes have been established but here we know the causes as well as the cures. It is because it takes time, sometimes decades, to overcome prejudices and the spirit of revenge that such outbursts persist.

Causes and Cures

All in all, the manner in which religions have flourished in India is a remarkable story of tolerance, co-existence and fusion. At the same time we have been guilty of tolerating and perpetuating unjust social stratification. The old evil of untouchability was a heinous crime. The peaceful revolution inspired by Mahatma Gandhi has helped our society to change. We had thought that with education, economic development and full democracy, we could emerge into a new era of equality; but education and economic development have sharpened the com-

petition for jobs. Adult franchise has given a new lease for caste, because we are still half way through this change.

The minorities and weaker sections of the community feel that they are not fully in the mainstream of national life. They feel that the benefits of economic development, of employment-opportunities and the sharing of political power has bypassed them. As awakening increases and young people from these communities demand a larger share in economic advancement and political power, there may be more tensions, but I feel that this is a passing phase.

We are at the stage when the tensions and inequalities dominate our minds. It is also unfortunate that the impartiality of the very forces who should ensure social harmony and justice and give protection is questioned. So far, our major emphasis in tackling social violence has been on the law and order angle. However, I think that we should correct this approach and give due weight also to other aspects like educational policy, employment opportunities, better understanding of our cultural traditions and so on.

Religious and Regional Bigotry

No true religion can conceivably teach hatred of other religions, but we have had communal organisations which have persistently given a distorted picture. It is an unfortunate fact of life that these organisations are thriving in many parts of our country. We cannot be helpless spectators but should try vigorously to counteract the influence of such organisations by all political, legal and administrative means that are available. A party may gain when riots occur by blaming the Government, but such a gain is bound to be temporary. It is the people who are the sufferers and no party can make a long-standing gain out of the



people's misery.

The Assam Situation

National integration has so far been mainly understood in terms of communal harmony and the treatment of Harijans and other backward groups. Developments in the North-East have highlighted another aspect of national integration.

Assam is in the midst of a prolonged agitation on the issue of what is now known as foreign nationals. In dealing with this agitation we have tried to follow the path of dialogue and have shown patience and understanding.

About the depth of feeling underlined in the agitation, I have no doubt. But I would like our friends in Assam, whether it is the young students, the Parishad or the Government employees or any other section of the Assamese people, to think of their problem in the larger context. They themselves keep reminding us that we should treat it as a national problem, and any such problem is a national problem, but they should also keep in view the national aspect as well as international obligations, national commitments and humanitarian considerations.

Assam must not suffer; India also must not suffer. Nor should hundreds of thousands of human beings suffer. A prosperous Assam cannot be built by striking at the root of national integrity, unity and our cherished ideals. The misgivings and apprehensions of minorities cannot be overlooked. In a democracy such as ours issues must be resolved through discussions and a solution found, which, if not satisfactory to all, is at least the least unsatisfactory to all concerned.

The North-Eastern States

While Government will spare no efforts to see that genuine



apprehensions are allayed and economic development of the States of the North-East accelerated, a great responsibility rests on political leadership and on the idealistic youth to keep before the people the all-India perspective and specially in view of their own future, what we hope will be enlarged and growing opportunities.

The animosities between the tribals and non-tribals in the North-East which had been dormant have revived. Largely these can be attributed to the divisive forces which have been at work and gained impetus during the recent past. People who have lived in amity for generations have suddenly begun looking at one another with suspicion. All of us here are aware of the delicate problems of the North-Eastern States. I do not think I need to say more about this question at this moment.

India's Special Feature

When this Council met in Srinagar in 1968, it was forcibly brought out that the term minority should not be regarded as meaning only Muslims. For, in Kashmir, the Muslims are the majority. In some places, Christians are the majority.

In fact, one of the special characteristics of our country is that no caste or group is in a position to dominate over the whole country. Let us convert this fact into a national advantage to ensure that there is a real and growing relationship of brotherhood and mutual responsibility based on trust.

But the present is full of danger signals which add special urgency to our meeting and to our work. We are here, in all humility, to search and work together for solutions. I have no doubt that many useful suggestions will emerge from our meeting which we can act upon not only as Government and political parties but as custodians of the people's well-being.



I welcome you once more and I hope that our deliberations will prove useful and lead to some positive action.

Opening remarks by the Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, at the National Integration Council meeting, New Delhi, November 12, 1980



TOGETHER WE SHALL MAKE INDIA STRONG AND GREAT

Rajiv Gandhi

Fellow Citizens,

Yesterday the mortal remains of Indira Gandhi were consigned, as she had wished, to the mighty Himalayas. Her immortal spirit beckons to us to build the India of her dreams.

Mahatma Gandhi breathed new life in to our ancient land. He brought freedom and taught us that the highest virtues are truth, love and non-violence. Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundations of a politically and technologically modern India—democratic, secular, socialist, non-aligned.

Indira Gandhi built firmly on these foundations. She made the sovereignty of the people a reality and strove to ensure that policies and laws secured their rights. She fought against fanaticism and narrowness in all their forms. She made the nation self-reliant in agriculture, industry and several branches of technology. She battled relentlessly against poverty. Hers was the foremost voice for international peace in our tense and troubled world.

Most important of all, she infused us with self-confidence and a sense of purpose. She gave us back our pride. This splendid heritage has been left to us by Indiraji. I pledge to preserve this precious legacy and to work for a united, strong and prosperous India, an India devoted to the cause of peace.

Nothing is more important than the unity and integrity of our nation. India is indivisible. Secularism is the bedrock of our nationhood. It implies more than tolerance. It involves an active effort for harmony. No religion preaches hatred and intolerance. Vested interests, both external and internal, are inci-

ting and exploiting communal passions and violence to India, Answering communalism with communalism will only help these subversive and secessionist forces. The combined might of the people and the Government will thwart their designs. There is only one India. It belongs to all of us.

Basic Aim : Removal of Poverty

Speedy removal of poverty is our basic objective. The Government is judged by the degree and quantity of change it can bring about. Five years ago, when the people recalled Indiraji to office, she promised an effective Government and she kept her promise. Food production and energy output have touched record levels. Science has surged forward. Industry has resumed its dynamic movement, Employment opportunities are expanding. The economy has withstood the most severe natural calamities and international crises. The political and economic standing of India in the world is higher than ever.

I reaffirm our adherence to socialism and planning. Without planning we could not have reached where we are. Our aim is continuous modernisation, higher productivity and rapid advance of social justice.

In our Plans, rural development will have priority, greater production of cereals, pulses and oilseeds, spread of irrigation, support for small industries and handicrafts and all-round induction of new technology. Large expansion of employment, specially for rural and urban youth, is essential to reduce economic disparities and to ensure social peace. For this, high rates of growth in agriculture and industry will have to be achieved.

The public sector has played a historic role in laying the foundation of a modern economy. It has to shoulder greater responsibilities, and to become more efficient to generate surplus-



ses for investment.

Within the framework of national policies, the private sector has adequate scope to enhance the productive potential of the economy. But it should acquire the strength competition provides by reducing costs and absorbing new technology. Both public and private sectors must venture out into new fields, improve quality and develop indigenous technology.

Kisans and workers are the pillars of our economy. The focus of our policies on their welfare will be sharpened.

Government will remain unwavering in its resolve to improve the living and working conditions of the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, backward classes, artisans, agricultural labour, women and the urban poor. The 20-Point Programme of Indira Gandhi, which aims to fulfil the immediate needs of the people, will be faithfully and effectively implemented.

Our greatest wealth is our people. We must enable individuals and families to realise their potential to the full. For this we shall stress programmes of family planning, nutrition, welfare of women and children, control of disease, elementary and adult education, sports and better communications.

Improving Quality of Service

I am committed to improving the quality of service to the people. I want to tell all those involved in this task that if they work with integrity and dedication, they will have full protection from outside pressures and interference. But I also want to tell them that no quarter will be given to the corrupt, the lazy, the inefficient.

Our administrative system must become more goal-oriented. A new work-ethic, a new work-culture must be evolved in which



Government is result-bound and not procedure-bound. Reward and punishment must be related to performance. A strong concern for efficiency must permeate all institution.

The last few years have witnessed notable advances in science and technology. Indira Gandhi had a fine partnership with scientists, which helped the nation. I shall keep up this interaction.

The creative arts give to life the vision of inner truth and beauty. We owe much to our craftsmen who have carried on centuries old aesthetic traditions and to our artists and writers. We have to conserve our priceless heritage and to create an environment in which art will flourish.

Our educational system needs to be reconstructed as a dynamic force for national growth and integration. I intend to initiate a comprehensive review of the system and to build a national consensus for reform.

Peace With Our Neighbour

For nation-building, the first requisite is peace—peace with our neighbours and peace in the world. Our security environment has been vitiated. Sophisticated arms have been inducted on a large scale in to our neighbourhood and in to the Indian Ocean. We can depend on our armed forces to ensure the country's inviolability. The Government will continue to do all it can for the modernisation of defence and the welfare of our service personnel and their families. I take this occasion to greet our jawans and officers, in whose hands the nation's honour and integrity are safe.

Eminent leaders and representatives of the world's nations came here last week bringing to us their people's sympathy.

I made it clear to them that India will continue its work for international peace, friendship and cooperation.

Jawaharlal Nehru bequeathed to us a foreign policy which Indira Gandhi so creatively enriched, I shall carry it forward. I reaffirm our adherence to the United Nations, to the Non-Aligned Movement and to our opposition to colonialism, old or new. We are determined to work for narrowing international economic disparities.

We want to develop closer relations with each one of our immediate neighbours in a spirit of peace, friendship and cooperation. This is what we have offered to Pakistan. We have always believed that non-interferences, peaceful co-existence and non-alignment should be the guiding principles of our relationship. We shall further pursue the concept of common regional development of South Asia. Our relations with China are improving and we shall continue to seek a satisfactory solution to the difficulties.

We highly value the wide-ranging and time-tested relationship with the Soviet Union, based upon mutual cooperation, friendship and vital support when most needed.

We have always been friends with both the East and the West, as they are called, and we want better relations between them.

With the United States of America, we have a multifaceted relationship. We attach importance to our economic, technological and cultural cooperation with them.

I wish also to assure the peoples of other regions—the Arab world, South-West and South-East Asia, the Far East and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbeans, and Western and Eastern Europe that we are keen on strengthening political and economic relations with them.



Indira Gandhi reminded us that the most important [single challenge] before the world today is the threat of nuclear war. We shall continue her relentless crusade against the arms race. she was equally concerned about the global economic crisis. We persevere in the efforts to promote a dialogue between the North and the South and to build a just world economic order.

Secularism and Tolerance

The assassination of Indira Gandhi is a grave and critical moment. There has been a churning of the subconscious of our people. It is in moments of crisis that India awakens and responds with clarity and new creative endeavour. Out of turmoil must arise an intelligence that builds a vital sense of togetherness creates order and establishes a deeply human relationship between man and man.

Our heritage, the most ancient, and that left us by the torchbearers of freedom, rests on secularism and tolerance. Indira Gandhi gave her life in building an India which was rooted in these basic tenets. We have to fuse the wisdom of our seers with the insights and artifacts of science and technology. We have to conserve and cherish our heritage—political, cultural and philosophic. We have to establish a right relationship with our natural resources, strengthen our newly own self-reliance. With this we must have the courage to boldly innovate, for change is demanded in our methods of work, in the absorption of new knowledge, in the values we generate for ensuring a meaningful and creative life for our people.

As we build to day so will be the tomorrow. Together we will build for an India of the 21st Century. Together we will transform what needs transformation. Together we will face

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challenges and obstacles to progress. Together we will create an India that is strong, wise and great—a flame of peace and tolerance.

The Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi's broadcast to the nation over A. I. R. and Doordarshan. 12 November 1984

PART-II

THE ANTECEDENTS

Dr. Ramila Thapar

For many Europeans, India evoked a picture of Maharajas, snake-charmers, and the rope-trick. This has lent both allure and romanticism to things Indian. But in the last couple of decades, with the increasing reference to India as an economically underdeveloped country, the image of India as a vital, pulsating land has begun to emerge from the fog Maharajas, snake-charmers, and the rope-trick. The Maharajas are now fast disappearing and the rope-trick was at best a hallucination. Only the snake-charmer remains : generally an ill-fed man who risks his life to catch a snake, remove its poisonous fangs, and make it sway to the movement of the gourd pipe ; and all this in the hope of the occasional coin to feed him, his family, and the snake.

In the imagination of Europe, India had always been the fabulous land of untold wealth and mystical happenings, with more than just a normal share of wise men. From the gold-digging ants to the philosophers who lived naked in the forests, these were all part of the picture which the ancient Greeks had of the Indians and this image persisted throughout many centuries. It might be more charitable not to destroy it, but to preserve it would mean the perpetuation of a myth.

Wealth in India, as in every other ancient culture, was limited to the few. Mystical activities were also the preoccupation of but a handful of people. It is true, however, that acceptance of such activities was characteristic of the majority. Whereas in some other cultures the rope-trick would have been ascribed to the promptings of the devil and all reference to it suppressed, in



India it was regarded with amused benevolence. The fundamental sanity of Indian civilization has been due to an absence of Satan.

The association of India with wealth, magic, and wisdom remained current for many centuries. But this attitude began to change in the nineteenth century when Europe entered the modern age and the lack of enthusiasm for Indian culture in certain circles became almost proportionate to the earlier overenthusiasm. It was now discovered that India had none of the qualities which the new Europe admired. There was apparently no stress on the values of rational thought and individualism. India's culture was a stagnant culture and was regarded with supreme disdain, an attitude perhaps best typified in Macaulay's contempt for things Indian. The political institutions of India, visualized largely as the rule of the Maharajas and Sultans, were dismissed as despotic and totally unrepresentative of public opinion. And this, in an age of democratic revolutions, was about the worst of sins.

Yet, a contrary attitude emerged from amongst a small section of European scholars who had discovered India largely through its ancient philosophy and its literature in Sanskrit. This attitude deliberately stressed the non-modern, non-utilitarian aspects of Indian culture, where the existence of a continuity of religion of over three thousands years was acclaimed; and where it was believed that the Indian pattern of life was so concerned with metaphysics and the subtleties of religious belief that there was no time for the mundane things of life. German romanticism was the most vehement in its support of this image of India a vehemence which was to do as much damage to India as Macaulay's rejection of Indian culture. India now became the mystic land for many Europeans, where even the most ordinary actions were imbued with symbolism. India was the genesis of the

spiritual East, and also, incidentally, the refuge of European intellectuals seeking escape from their own pattern of life. A dichotomy in values was maintained, Indian values being described as 'spiritual' and European values as 'materialistic,' with little attempt at placing these supposedly spiritual values in the context of Indian society (which might have led to some rather disturbing results). This theme was taken up by a section of Indian thinkers during the last hundred years and became a consolation to the Indian intelligentsia for its inability to compete with the technical superiority of Britain.

The discovery of the Indian past, and its revelation to Europe in the eighteenth century, was largely the work of Jesuits in India and of Europeans employed by the East India Company, such as Sir William Jones and Charles Wilkins. Soon the numbers of those interested in studying the classical languages and literatures of India grew, and the early nineteenth century saw considerable achievements in linguistics, ethnography, and other fields of Indology. Scholars in Europe expressed a keen interest in this new field of inquiry as is evident from the number of persons who took to Indology and of one of whom at least mention must be made-F. Max Muller.

Those who were most directly concerned with India in the nineteenth century were the British administrators, and the early non-Indian historians of India came largely from this group. Consequently, the early histories were administrator's histories', concerned mainly with the rise and fall of dynasties and empires. The Protagonists of Indian history were the kings and the narration of events revolved around them. The autocratic king, oppressive and unconcerned with the welfare of his subjects, was the standard image of the Indian ruler, but for exceptions such as Ashoka, Chandragupta II, or Akbar. As for actual

governing, the underlying assumption was that British administration was in fact superior to any other known to the history of the subcontinent.

This interpretation of Indian history made its impact on Indian historians writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dynastic histories with a high-lighting of the lives of rulers were the main content of standard works. But the second aspect of the interpretation produced a different reaction. Most of the Indian historians had either participated in the national movement for independence or had been influenced by it. Their contention was that the Golden Age in India had existed prior to the coming of the British and that the ancient past of India was a particularly glorious period of her history. This view was a natural and inevitable adjunct to the national aspiration of the Indian people in the early twentieth century.

In this connexion there was another *bete noire* which cast its shadow on much of the early writing on ancient India. European historians working on this period had been brought up on the classical tradition of Europe, where it was firmly believed that the greatest human achievement was the civilization of the ancient Greeks-*le miracle Grec*. Consequently, every newly discovered culture was measured against ancient Greece and invariably found to be lacking. Or, if there were individual features worth admiring, the instinct was to try and connect them with Greek culture. Vincent Smith, for some decades regarded as the pre-eminent historian of early India, was prone to this tendency. When writing of the murals at the famous Buddhist site at Ajanta, and particularly of a painting supposedly depicting the arrival of an embassy from a Sassanian king of Persia in the seventh century A.D., totally unconnected with Greece both artistically and histo-

rically, he states :

... The picture, in addition to its interest as a contemporary record of unusual political relations between India and Persia, is one of the highest value as landmark in the history of art. It not only fixes the date of some of the most important paintings at Ajanta and so establishes a standard by which the date of others can be judged, but also suggests the possibility that the Ajanta school of pictorial art may have been derived from Persia and ultimately from Greece 1.

Not surprisingly Indian historians reacted sharply to such statements. Attempts were made to prove either that India had not derived any part of its culture from Greece or else that the culture of India was close parallel to that of Greece, manifesting all the qualities which were present in the latter. That every civilization is its own miracle was not as yet recognized either by European or by Indian historians. The idea of assessing a civilization on its own merits was to come at a later stage.

When European scholars first established a relationship with India in the eighteenth century and became curious about its past, their sources of information were the brahman priests—the acknowledged guardians of the ancient tradition, who maintained that this tradition was preserved in the Sanskrit sources with which only they were familiar. Thus, much of the early history of India was reconstructed almost entirely from Sanskrit sources, i.e., from material preserved in the ancient classical language. Many of these works were religious in nature and this naturally coloured the interpretation of the past. Even somewhat more secular literature such as the *Dharmashastras* (Law Books) had brahman authors and commentators and was therefore biased in favour of those in authority and generally adhered to the brahmanical interpretation of the past, irrespective of its historical

validity. For example, the caste system as described in these sources appears to have been a rigid stratification of society, apparently imposed from an early period and there after preserved almost intact for many centuries. Yet the actual working of caste in Indian society permitted of much variation, which naturally the authors of the Law Books did not wish to admit.

The use of evidence from a variety of different sources at a later period was both a challenge to certain aspects of brahmanical evidence and a corroboration of others, thus providing a more accurate picture of the past. Evidence from contemporary inscriptions and coins became increasingly important. The descriptions left by foreign travellers and recorded in non-Indian sources—Greek, Latin, Chinese and Arabic—allowed of new perspectives, as also did the more tangible remains of the past made available through excavations. The corpus of evidence on Buddhism, for instance, was increased with the availability of the Pali Canon as recorded in Ceylon and from Chinese sources. Sources in Arabic and Persian relating to the history of India in the post-thirteenth centuries began to be studied in their own right and ceased being regarded as supplements to Islamic culture in western Asia.

The concentration on dynastic histories in the early studies was also due to the assumption that in 'Oriental' societies the power of the ruler was supreme even in the day-to-day functioning of the government. Yet authority for routine functions was rarely concentrated at the centre in the Indian political systems. The unique feature of Indian society—the caste system—integrated as it was to both politics and professional activity, localized many of the functions which would normally be associated with a truly 'oriental despotism'. The understanding of the functioning of power in India lies in analyses of the caste and sub-caste relationship and of institutions such as the guilds and village



councils, and not merely in the survey of dynastic power. Unfortunately, the significance of such studies has only recently been recognized, and it will probably take another decade or two of intensive scholarship before historically valid generalizations can be made. For the present, one can at best indicate the possible generators of power.

That the study of institutions did not receive much emphasis was in part due to the belief that they did not undergo much change : an idea which also fostered the theory that Indian culture has been a static, unchanging culture for many centuries, largely owing to the lethargy of the Indian and his gloomy, fatalistic attitude to life. This of course is an exaggeration. Even a superficial analysis of the changing social relationship within the caste structure, or the agrarian systems, or the vigorous mercantile activities of Indians throughout the centuries, points to anything but a static socio-economic pattern. It is true that at certain levels there is in India a continuous cultural tradition extending over three thousand years, but this continuity should not be confused with stagnation. The chanting of the *gayatri** verse by a Hindu has a history of three millenia, but the context in which it is chanted today can hardly be said to have remained unchanged. It is surprising that, whilst work on Europe during the nineteenth century laid tremendous stress on discovering patterns of evolution in the history of Europe, the same approach was never applied to the study of Asian history. Indian history was treated as a series of islands in time each named after a particular dynasty and the same format was followed in most standard works by Indian historians. This is not to suggest that studies on other aspects were ignored. Some very interesting information was collected throughout the nineteenth century on various aspects of Indian society and religion. But somehow this information was



rarely integrated into standard historical works.

Emphasis on dynasties led to the division of Indian history into three major periods, Ancient, Medieval and Modern. The Ancient period frequently begins with the coming of Aryan culture (and in later publications with the Indus Valley Civilization) and concludes with the Turkish raids in northern India in c. A. D. 1000, which in turn inaugurate the Medieval period, lasting until the coming of the British in the mid-eighteenth century. This division was buttressed by the inappropriate equation of Ancient with Hindu and Medieval with Muslim since most of the dynasties of the first period were Hindu in origin and those of the second Muslim. The Muslim period was imbued with a distinctive character to distinguish it from the earlier period by stressing the separateness of Muslim culture at all levels. Justification for this thesis was sought in the writings of the theologians and court chroniclers of the Muslim rulers. In any case political trends being what they were in twentieth-century India, the Hindu and Muslim periodization was accepted by both Indian and non-Indian historians of India. But such a periodization of Indian history is misleading in its emphasis apart from being questionable in its assumptions. Religion was by no means the pre-eminent motivating factor of change in Indian history, as these titles would imply : it was one among a number of forces. Recently, attempts have been made at redefining the major periods of Indian history on the basis of changes of a less arbitrary kind than the above. (In order to prevent confusion the use of terms of division has been avoided in the chapters which follow.)

There was yet another factor which up to a point conditioned the emphasis of historical interpretation : the geographical structure of the sub-continent. The vast northern Indo-Gangetic plain lent itself more easily to the emergence of large unitary king

doms. The southern half of the sub-continent, the peninsula, was cut up into smaller regions by mountains, plateaux, and river valleys—the changing topography permitting of less political uniformity than the northern plain. In an age of empires as was the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the larger kingdoms of the north attracted the attention of historians. Periods when large kingdoms flourished became the 'Golden Ages' and those which saw the growth of smaller regional states became the 'Dark Ages'. The history of the peninsula received far less attention, except during those periods when it too could boast of empires. It suffered further from the fact that political strategy in the peninsula and its economic potential was not identical with that of the north. The northern kingdoms based their strength primarily on acquiring large areas of territory, and their revenue came mainly from the land. This was a simple and easily recognizable pattern for any historian. The structure of the southern kingdoms had also to take into account the more than marginal effects of sea power and the economics of maritime activities, which produced a more complicated pattern than that of the north.

The purpose of indicating the changing outlook of historical writing on India is not to dismiss the work of the early historians as being without value or to denigrate the importance of their scholarship. The inadequacies of their interpretation were often the inadequacies of their times, for a historian is frequently far more representative of his age than he is aware. Despite their shortcomings these studies laid the foundations of the history of India and gave a firm chronological framework, around which fresh interpretations can be constructed which will place the ideas and institutions of Indian civilization in their correct perspective.

The historian of India has in the past been regarded primarily as an Orientalist in the days when Orientalists were those who

studied the languages cultures of Asia and whose studies, in the popular mind at any rate, were fragrant with exotica. The nineteenth-century concept of Oriental studies has changed in the present century both in Europe and in India. In the contemporary world history is being increasingly regarded as part of the social sciences and less as the study of classical cultures *per se*. This newly developing interest seeks to ask a different set of questions from the Indian past : different from those asked by the Orientalist. The difference is largely one of changing historical emphases. Political histories and dynastic studies remain an important aspect of historical interpretation but these are viewed in the light of other features which go into the making of a people and a culture. Changes in the political pattern are inextricably entwined in changes in the economic structure and these in turn have a bearing on social relationships. If a religious movement finds a large following then its attraction must have some relevance to the kind of people who support it. A new language and a new literature can only emerge if they fulfil a need for the society in which they are rooted. It is not enough for the historian of India to present or to analyse the ideas of those who attempted to create the forms and contours of the history of India. It is essential to know why the people of India through the centuries have either accepted or rejected or modified these ideas.

An attempt has been made in this book to anticipate a few of these questions. The purpose of the book has been to indicate the institutions and the events which have contributed to the evolution of Indian culture. But the tendency to evaluate Indian culture and to make categorical value judgements has been avoided, since such an evaluation within the space of a brief history such as this would merely result in meaningless platitudes. This is not primarily a political history. Dynastic chronology has been

treated largely as a framework in time. In the course of tracing the evolution of certain aspects of Indian life – the economic structure, changing social relationships, the historical context of religious movements, the emergence and growth of languages, to mention but a few—certain patterns have emerged. It is intended in this book to describe these patterns and interpret the facts along lines which appear to be the most convincing

In recent years the early history of India has been enriched by the incorporation of evidence provided by two new techniques—the systematic study of society in its various facets, and the extensive use of a contemporary evidence from archaeology. The importance of the former lies in the fact that it indicates the possibilities of new ways of approaching the Indian past; and of posing questions, in the answers to which may lie a more real comprehension of the history of India. Such an approach has already been used effectively in certain types of research. The study of society has also stimulated an interest in comparative studies, not along the old lines of declaring one culture to be the norm and judging others by its standards, but rather in terms of a comparative analysis of many cultures. It is this approach which has made historical studies such as Marc Bloch's work on European feudalism relevant to the intellectual equipment of the historian of India.

Archaeology has provided tangible, three-dimensional facts, in the material remains discovered through survey and excavation. These facts not only corroborate literary evidence and provide statistical data but they also help to fill in the gaps, particularly in the earliest period of Indian history. Evidence on Indian pre-history obtained in the last fifteen years has been of considerable value in suggesting the origins of later patterns of culture. Even a superficial familiarity with the archaeological

picture of the sub-continent in the centuries preceding the historical period is helpful in understanding the early history of India.

The earliest traces of human activity in India, so far discovered go back to the Second Inter-Glacial period between 400,000 and 200,000 B. C. and these show evidence of the use of stone implements. There followed a long period of slow evolution, which gathered momentum towards the end and resulted in the spectacular Indus Valley Civilization (or the Harappa Culture as it has been more recently named) in c. 2300 B.C. The antecedents of the Harappa Culture are the village sites of the Baluchistan hills—the Nal Culture, and of the Makran coast to the west of the Indus delta—the Kulli Culture, and certain of the village communities along the rivers in Rajasthan and Punjab.

The Harappa Culture was the most extensive of the ancient civilizations in area, including not only the Indus plain (the Punjab and Sind), but also northern Rajasthan and the region of Kathiawar in western India. It was essentially a city culture and among the centres of authority were the two cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa.* There were maintained from the surplus produce of the country, judging by the elaborately constructed granaries found in both cities. Another source of income was the profit from a flourishing trade both within the northern and western areas of the sub-continent and between the people of this culture and those of the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia.

The cities show evidence of an advanced sense of civic planning and organization. Each city was divided into the citadel area, where the essential institutions of civic and religious life were located, and the residential area where the urban population lived.

Amongst the many remains of the Harappa culture perhaps the most puzzling are the seals—small, flat, square or rectangular

objects with a pictorial motif, human or animal, and an inscription. The latter remains undeciphered and holds promise of interesting information when it can be finally read. These seals, numbering about two thousand, appear to have been the tokens of the merchant, or possibly they were connected with the produce of the countryside which was brought into the cities.

Political continuity between the Harappa culture and the later Aryan culture was prevented by the intrusion of less civilized peoples who occupied the sites of the Indus valley in the first half of the second millennium B.C. By 1700 B.C. the Harappa culture had declined and the migration of the Indo-Aryans from Iran in about 1500 B.C. introduced new features into the cultural background of north-western India. This region of the sub-continent was always to remain in communication with areas to the north and the west of the Indus river and the Hindu Kush mountains. Sometimes it was absorbed into the politics of these regions and became a part of their cultural complex. Similarly, western India retained contact with the maritime areas to the west, those of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. This tended to emphasize the separateness of the development in the Indus and the Ganges plains.

Further east in the Ganges valley there is evidence of small settlements of people in the transition stage between hunting and agriculture, using a variety of stone and copper implements and an inferior type of ochre-coloured pottery. These were presumably the people whom the Indo-Aryans met when they moved in to the Ganges valley, since the Painted-Grey Ware associated (tentatively) with the Indo-Aryans had been found at some sites superimposed on levels containing the earlier ochre-coloured ware.

Painted-Grey Ware sites have been found in the western half

of the Ganges valley and range in date from 1100-500 B.C. More recently iron has also been found at some of the earlier sites, which may lead to an earlier date for the use of iron in India than the generally accepted one of c. 800 B.C. The Painted-Grey Ware sites indicate agricultural communities where the breeding of cattle and horses were also known. They were generally familiar with the use of copper. The horse is conspicuously absent at Harappan sites and this evidence is used as one of the bases for tentatively suggesting that the Painted-Grey Ware sites may have been those of the Aryan culture. The evidence so far available from these sites is in broad agreement with the description of Aryan culture in the Vedic sources.

The Deccan shows evidence of a microlithic industry—the making of the tiny flint tools - in association later with a chalcolithic culture where bronze and copper were used together with stone. This gave way in the first half of the first millenium B.C. to the superior technology of the Ganges valley, as is apparent from the introduction of iron and subsequently of a special type of pottery - the northern black polished ware—both of which are associated with the Aryan culture of the Ganges valley. Evidently the Aryans had by now begun to move southwards into the Deccan and communication had been established between the Ganges valley and the Deccan. The Deccan was being prepared for the role it was to play for many centuries in the history of the sub-continent, that of being a bridge between the north and the south. Not only did it receive elements of Aryan culture from the north, but by about 300 B.C. the sites of the lower Deccan were in contact with the Megalithic culture of the extreme south of India.

The Megalithic culture of south India (Madras, Kerala, and



Mysore) has close similarities with the Megalithic cultures of the Mediterranean and may have arrived in south India from western Asia, the earliest contact in what was to become a close relationship between the two areas which lasted till well into recent times.

The south Indian megaliths or burial monuments were either rock-cut cave sepulchres or else circular enclosures in the midst of which were rectangular stone cists or pottery sarcophagi containing bones and such grave furnishings as were customary (e.g. a special black-and-red ware). These Monuments are generally found in the vicinity of fertile land irrigated from tanks specially built for spring water, which suggests a remarkable degree of cooperative effort on the part of the builders. The Megalithic culture which dates to c. 500 B.C. and A.D. 100 brings us to the historical period in south India.

The ethnic composition of the people involved in these various cultures was not indetical. Ethnological studies have revealed six main races in the Indian sub-continent. The earliest was apparently the Negrito and this was followed by the Proto-Australoid, the Mongoloid the Mediterranean, and later those associated with Aryan culture. There is evidence of the Proto-Australoid, the Mediterranean, Alpine, and Mongoloid in the skeletal remains at Harappan sites. Presumably by this time the first five of the races mentioned above were well settled in India. The Proto-Australoid were the basic element in the Indian population and their speech was of the Austric linguistic group, a specimen of which survives in the Munda speech of certain primitive tribes. The Mediterranean race is generally associated with Dravidian culture. The concentration of the Mongoloid people was in the north-eastern and northern fringes of the sub-continent, and their speech conforms to the Sino-Tibetar

group. The last to come were the people commonly referred to as the Aryans. Aryan is in fact a linguistic term indicating a speech group of Indo-European origin, and is *not* an ethnic term. To refer to the coming of the Aryans is therefore inaccurate. However, this inaccuracy has become so current in historical studies of early India that it would sound unduly pedantic to refer to the Aryans as 'the Aryan speaking peoples'. Their ethnic identity is not known on the basis of the Indian evidence.

Tentative Calculations have been made of the population of the sub-continent during various periods, but this remain largely conjectural. An estimate suggested for the sub-continent at the end of the forth century B.C. is 181 million.* This estimate is based partly on the size of the indian army as described in Greek sources when referring to the campaign of Alexander of Macedon in northern India. It is possible of course that Greek writers were exaggerating the figures in order to demonstrate to their readers the formidable military strength which Alexander would have had to face had he pursued his campaign into the Ganges valley. The estimate of 181 million appears to be rather high : a figure of about 100 million or less for the early period might be more credible. An estimate for the early seventeenth century is 100 million * The first census of the British Indian administration covering the entire sub-continent carried out in 1881 put the population at a little over 253 million.

It was against this background of peoples and cultures of Indian prehistory that the Aryan-speaking tribes arrived in the north and made their contribution to Indian civilization.

A hymn from the Rig-Veda dedicated to the solar god Savitri and regarded as the most holy verse in Hindu scripture.

Recent excavations have revealed a series of cities—Kot Diji (in Sind), Kalibangan (in Rajasthan), Rupar (in punjab), and the port-town of Lothal (in Gujarat). But the two earlier cities appear to have been the most important

J. M. Datta, 'Population of India about 320 B. C.', *Man in India*, Vol. 42, No 4. Oct.—Dec. 1962.

W H. Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, (Delhi, 1962) P. 21.



COMMUNAL INTERPRETATION OF INDIAN HISTORY

Dr. Satish Chandra

(*By Courtesy of SAMPRADAYIKTA VIRODHI
COMMITTEE New Delhi*)

THE manner in which a country's past is viewed and presented has always been an important question. How history was made a means of propagating militarism and racialism in Hitlerite Germany is well known. The Japanese militarists, too, fostered national chauvinism through Japanese history and the leaders of Maoist China are doing the same today. Imperialism had its own view of history. It emphasised the divisive aspects of the societies it dominated, and sought to undermine the self-confidence of the people of those countries by emphasising their failures and failings in history.

British historians led by Sir Charles Elliot, distorted Indian history by over-emphasising Hindu-Muslim differences in mediaeval times, and making out that the Hindus were infinitely better off under the British rule than in the previous times. Their lead was followed by many Indian historians. But this was not the only root of the communal distortion of Indian history. Many of the early 'Indologists', who did pioneer work for reconstructing the early period of Indian history, unfortunately emphasised all those aspect which were the opposite of Western industrial society which was unfolding itself at that time. Thus, they pictured the ancient Indian society as one which was dominated by religious and spiritual values, and where vulgar materialism had little sway.



Though Jawahar Lal Nehru in his book, "*Discovery of India*" was at pains to refute the view that the common people of India were more concerned with their spiritual rather than their material welfare, the earlier British view of India as a land of spiritualism was picked up uncritically both by the nationalists and by the Hindu revivalists, and by and large, still holds the field.

One effect of this approach to Indian history is to place an undue and onesided emphasis on the contribution of the Aryans. That the Aryan people who came to India were in many ways culturally backward, and that it took several centuries for them to attain the level of civilization which had been reached in Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Kalibangan and Lothal before the arrival of the Aryans is well known. However, the civilization which subsequently developed in India is generally portrayed as an Aryan civilization with marginal adaptation of pre-Aryan ideas and institutions, instead of being presented as an integrated civilization of Aryans and non-Aryans. The net result of this outlook is to refuse to study the phases of the growth of society in India, and to co-relate these phases with cultural growth. Incidentally this outlook generally implies a distrust of archaeology which has opened up such vast vistas of early Aryan and pre-Aryan civilizations and cultures.

It might be argued that the acts of omission and commission of the British historians are no longer relevant for us today, not only because the British have departed but because the sub-continent has been divided on communal lines, even while the leaders and a large part of the thinking public in India rejected the two-nation theory.

But it is precisely because of these developments that it is necessary to examine the communal understanding of Indian history, viz., the thesis that Hindus and Muslims have always remained divided on account of their cultural differences, and that politics in India have been based on these differences. Some writers follow this up by asserting that India has become free to develop after one thousand years of foreign rule and cultural darkness. Others try to prove that even the best of the mediaeval Muslim rules, such as Akbar, were morally corrupt, and that their policies were largely based on lust for Hindu women.

Powerful voices, both within and outside India, have been raised advocating a communal interpretation of Indian history in the name of "historical objectivity". Thus, Prof. R. C. Majumdar in his book, *"The Delhi Sultanate"* published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan deplores that the Muslims "did not merge themselves into this pattern and form with the Hindus a single type of homogenous culture. His picture of mediaeval India is thus of one which remained "permanently divided into two powerful units, which did not prove amenable to a fusion or even any close permanent co-ordination". This is precisely what the advocates of the two-nation theory argued.

Thus, Dr. Ishtiaq Quraishi of the Karachi University, writing in his book, *"The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent"* published from New York, asserts that "at all times the Muslime of the sub-continent were resolute in refusing to be assimilated to the local population and made conscious efforts to maintain their distinctive character" (pp. 78-82.).

And finally, Dr. P. Hardy of the London University sets the seal by roundly proclaiming that "neither educated Muslims nor Hindus accepted cultural co-existence as a prelude to cultural assimilation. Thus, long before British rule and long before modern political notions of Muslim nationhood, the consensus of the Muslim Community had rejected the eclecticism of Akbar and Dara. Cultural apartheid was the dominant ideal in mediaeval Muslim India."

The remarkable consensus of these writers over the impossibility of assimilation between the Hindu and Muslim cultures is significant. The question, however, is how far is it historically correct to regard Hindu or Muslim cultures as being single entities impervious to mutual assimilation? The argument which has been put forward most commonly is that Hinduism which had assimilated Greeks, Scythians, Huns etc. in its body politic, would have assimilated the Turks, Pathans and Mughals, too, if the latter had not been so desperately keen to keep their separate identity and/or had not held political power in their hands. With the events of 1947 in the background, this argument appears an appealing one, and puts the responsibility of failure of cultural assimilation squarely on Muslim political leaders and thinkers.

It is, of course, fashionable in some historical quarters in Pakistan to regard separatism as the *leit motif* of Muslim movements in mediaeval times, and blaming the Hindus for their casteist narrowness. That caste prejudices played a considerable role in keeping Hindu and Muslim societies separated is undeniable. But this presumes that but for

the caste element, the Muslims would have been willing to be assimilated in such a manner as to lose completely their separate identity.

Unity in diversity has always been regarded as a basic feature of Indian culture which contained within itself a number of different sects and religions, such as Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, etc., as well as sub-cultures based on regional factors. The Muslim community, too, revealed wide differences. An Arab or an Ottoman Turk professing the Muslim faith, was culturally far different from an Indian Muslim. The Muslims in India were powerfully influenced not only by the local Indian environment, but also by the regional sub-cultures.

Scant attention has so far been paid by the Indian historians to the growth of these sub-cultures. As we study the growth of Bengali, Maharashtri, Gujarati, or Punjabi sub-cultures, the Hindu-Muslim differences on an all-India plane appear in a somewhat different perspective. Both Hindus and Muslims contributed to the growth of Punjabi and Bengali language and literature. Which part of them can be called Hindu, and which Muslim? Similarly the outlook of a Muslim Bohra merchant and a Gujrati Bania were hardly distinguishable. In Awadh (Eastern U.P.) the manner, appearance, language and outlook of the Hindus and the Muslims in both towns and villages were hardly distinguishable in the 19th century.

Two conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing ; first, that cultural assimilation was a long process, and that developments did not take place at the same place in different areas. We should also be clear about the

word culture. If by culture is meant the religious ideas and values laid down in the scripture, obviously there was no possibility of the assimilation of Islam, which had a definite dogma, and a universal faith and sense of brotherhood. into a religion like Hinduism which was based essentially on birth and categorisation of human beings into castes based on birth.

On the other hand, if by culture we understand a definite set of values reflected in literature, thought and art, it would be difficult to say whether the common points are less numerous and less important than the points of difference. Take for example, the mediaeval Bhakti and Sufi movements. Whatever their origin, the values which they advocated were remarkably similar, and a wide departure from the views propounded by those who took their stand on their respective scriptures.

Similarly, in the field of architecture, painting and music. While the Turks destroyed a great deal, particularly in the early phase, they also built a great deal. The magnificent buildings which the Khilji, Tughlaq, Afghan and Mughal rulers put up in North India were equalled if not surpassed by the rulers of Gujarat, Malwa, and the Deccan. These buildings, which assimilated both Indian and West Asian architectural traditions, gradually led to the evolution of a national style which continued to have vitality till the 20th century. Sir Edward Lutyens incorporated this style in his design of New Delhi.

In recent years, a few persons have been asserting that some of the mediaeval buildings are really Hindu, or Rajput buildings. Even if these arguments—which fly in the face

of historical evidence, and development of style—are accepted, can they prove that all the magnificent buildings put up in the mediaeval period are Hindu? As if no magnificent buildings were put up outside India in West Asia. And does not this desperate effort to deny the cultural contribution of the Mughals and others show a remarkable insularity, or deep rooted sense of inferiority? The next stage in this type of thinking could well be the argument that the Mughal empire was really a Rajput empire, propped up by Rajput arms, and therefore its achievements are really Rajput achievements !

It is perhaps not necessary to trace the growth of painting and music during the period. The classical music we know today in North India was really the product of this period. Many new ragas and modes as well as instruments were introduced and incorporated during this period. In fact, classical music is the best example of the assimilation of Hindu and Muslim traditions. The impact of Mughal painting (itself a fusion of Persian and Indian traditions) on Rajput and Pahari painting is too well known.

It may be argued that the real problem of mediaeval India was not of cultural assimilation but of the distribution of political and economic power between the Hindus and the Muslims, and the allied problems of the relationship between state and religion in mediaeval India. Communal writing in Indian history distorts the notion of the State. The state in ancient India is presented as a vehicle of *dharma* or righteousness by some writers. If the state in ancient India is to be based on the *Dharmashastra*, it would be difficult to deny that this implied the oppression of the *shudras*,



indirectly by saddling upon the ruler the responsibility of maintaining the four-fold caste system, and more directly being responsible for enforcing the extreme injunctions prescribed by Manu, such as about cutting the tongue of a shudra out if he recited the Vedas.

But the reality was different. As a 10th century writer, Medhatichi explains, the king's duty was derived both from the *Dharamashastra* and the *Arthashastra*, or both from canon of law and politics. His raj dharma or public duty is based substantially on the letter. This means that religion and politics are separate, and the king is guided mainly by politics, though, he does not have a preceptor to advise him, and would not commit an open breach of canon of law if avoidable. In a real sense, the state in ancient India was thus essentially secular.

The situation in mediaeval India under the Sultans was not fundamentally different. Alauddin Khilji bluntly told Qazi Mughisuddin that he did not know what was lawful or unlawful, but whatever was the need of the situation or the good of the state, that he decreed. The result of this approach was that even an orthodox man like Ziauddin Barani, the historians, concluded that a *truly Islamic state could not exist in India*. It could only be a state which had the outer trappings of Islam. A Muslim king was to see that there was no open breach of the laws of Islam, that honest God fearing Muslims should be appointed as Qazis (judges) etc., that in general, ruler should continuously wage war (*iehad*) against the unbeliever.

The private conduct of the citizens did not concern the king ; nor did the private life of the king concern the



public. A state policy of this type he called *jahan dari* as distinguished from the policy of *din-dari* which visualised the strict enforcement of all the laws of *Shariat*. A second effect was the growth of secular laws called *Zawabit*, in contradistinction from Holy law or *sharia*. It is significant that one of the most important compendiums of such laws, the *zawabit-i-Alomgiri* was compiled in the regime of the most orthodox Muslim ruler, Aurangzeb. It is thus clear that the state in India was never truly Islamic, and, in course of time, as the Hindus were admitted to the highest offices, due to the force of circumstances, it became even less religious and more secular in outlook.

Apart from studying the relationship in mediaeval times between political authority, Holy Law and the upholder of Law--the Ulema--modern scholarship has attempted to study the distribution of political and economic power in mediaeval Indian society. It has been shown conclusively that during the 16th and 17th centuries as well as during the earlier period, economic power and political authority, particularly at the local and regional level, almost everywhere rested in the hands of a class of people designated *zamindars* by the writers of the period. Unlike the zamindars of the British period, these zamindars were generally not outsiders or money grabbers.

They enjoyed great prestige in the rural areas, being closely linked with the castes and communities settled on the land, and did not interfere with the traditional right of the peasants. They also had considerable military forces at the disposal. During Akbar's time, the forces at the disposal of the zamindars amounted to 384,558 cavalry ; 4,277,057 infantry, 1283 elephants ; 4,260 guns and 4,500

boats. No wonder, the Turkish and Mughal rulers tried to establish friendly relations with the zamindars. For all practical purposes, the village affairs, thus, continued to be largely managed by persons familiar to the villages. Later on, in the time of Akbar, many of these zamindars were admitted to the nobility and thus given authority over a wider section. During the second half of the seventeenth century, the proportion of Hindus in the nobility at various levels, from the highest to the lowest, rose to about 33 per cent.

The communal interpretation of mediaeval Indian history which considers conflict between Muslims and Hindus as a major theme, over-simplifies this complex reality and tried to slur over the social problems. The relations of the Turkish and Mughal rules with the zamindars who were predominantly Hindu was not primarily a communal but a social problem. The zamindars posed a serious administrative problem because they engaged in mutual warfare, sometime acted as petty tyrants to the peasants and resisted and opposed centralised political authority and administration. At the same time, they were indispensable by virtue of their influence and knowledge of local affairs. This was a dilemma which the mediaeval state and society were unable to resolve and which had important implications for the subsequent period.

It is perhaps not necessary to say anything about the deliberate effort made by Akbar to intergate the ruling classes by forming personal relations with them. Matrimonial relations were formed between him and members of his immediate family with many noble families, and with the families of zamindars, both Hindu and Muslim.

Matrimonial relations between the rulers and the local rajas was not anything new. It had been practised by the rulers of Gujarat, Malwa and the Bahamani kingdom. In Akbar's time, these relations became means of forging political and personal bonds with these sections. Even before the fall of Chittor, at the siege of Ranthambhor, Akbar had clearly indicated to the Hadas that the sending of a *dola* was not a pre-condition for good relations. The struggle between Akbar and Pratap was, therefore, not over the question of marriages, but on political issues.

There is no doubt that these marriages, though they were essentially political in nature, helped to bring the Mughals and the Rajputs together in more ways than one. It is also significant that the utility of these marriages to both sides was not questioned by any reputed Hindu historian till as late as the end of the 19th century. Thus neither Banki Das, nor Kaviraj Shyamal Das considered it an outrage on Hindu women.

In the end, it may be said that despite assimilation and understanding in different fields, the Hindu and Muslim societies and cultures did remain separate to some extent. The reasons for this may have been two. In the first place, a unified culture pre-supposes a unified society, at least at the higher level. The extent to which either Hindu or Muslim societies at the higher level were unified is questionable. Hindus society was always riven by the claims of superiority between the two higher castes—Brahmans and Kshatriyas, and to this may be added regional and linguistic disparities which were never absent. Muslim society was riven by racial and sectarian differences. Secondly, in the field of religion and thought also, many new ideas were

broached, but the only basis on which a measure of agreement was arrived at between Hindus and Muslims was mystical and non-rational—an insecure basis which could be subverted at any time by both rational and non-rational arguments. How weak this basis was, was made manifest only towards the end of the 19th century when the interests of the upper classes in the two communities began to diverge.

A non-communal interpretation of Indian history does not mean denying cultural and social differences between Hindus and Muslim. But it means that all aspects, not merely religious differences, should be studied. Not only points of differences, but points of contact and understanding should also be brought out. Secondly, in order to understand the mediaeval reality, we should study not only the attitudes of a few rulers but the entire relationship between the different communities and sections. The communal interpretation of history means, above all, avoidance of the lives of the people. No wonder, it is more concerned with heroes or villains than with the structure of society and the distribution of political and economic power within it. The communal interpretation of history thus means above all the adoption of out-moded and obsolete methods and methodology.



ON FEW COMMUNAL DISTORTION OF INDIAN HISTORY

B. N. Pande (Governor orissa)

In this vast land of ours have dwelt, since time immemorial, peoples of different races and cultures and into this land entered races from beyond the mountains and the seas. But the old inhabitants and the new-comers, after they had struggled and fought, eventually forgot their enmities, made peace and joined in their common endeavour. Each epoch of such a fusion was marked by an efflorescence of culture in which the different elements were so cunningly mixed as to make one whole.

This unity of spirit has ever been conveying to the different groups and communities, which form part of the whole known as India, the fundamental realisation that although the waves upon sea are many and play of winds upon its surface gives rise to varied and even contradictory phenomena like calms and storms, yet the substance of this multiplicity and variety is the unchanging sea.

The socio-economic continuity is the distinguishing feature of Indian history. The harmony found in the many-sided cultures of the people of India stems from this source. Thus although India has many religions, many languages, many races, its fundamental attitudes towards life have persisted through centuries and millennia. It is a remarkable fact that the socio-economic structure of India, which originated in the settlements of the Aryans and their assimilation of the pre-Aryan inhabitants of

India, continued without any radical change till the nineteenth century.

This unity of her history, her ideals and of her humanity is the living spirit of India. It is greater than any of its particular manifestations in time or in type. It underlies the multiplicity of our creeds and sects, customs and institutions, and art and philosophies. It underlies our historic failures and successes, our struggles and triumphs. It abides in the midst of these changes. It is this spirit which fused the pre-Dravidian, the Dravidian and the Aryan into that ancient social organism which found utterance in the sublime philosophies, beautiful crafts, the stirring arts, which make up the first chapter of our history. Rama and Krishna, Mahavira and Buddha, Chandragupta and Ashoka, Valmika and Vyasa worthily represent the spirit of this culture. The monuments of Sarnath and Sanchi, and paintings of Bagh and Ajanta, and the temples of Khajuraho and Bhubneshwar, the dramas of Kalidas and Bhavabhuti constitute the living memory of this glorious age.

The close of this epoch saw the impact of new races—Arabs, Turks and Moghals. The ancient culture of India came into violent conflict with the new comers, but even before the political struggles had ended, our construction had begun. Islam and Hinduism, which appeared at the start, so antithetical, at last intermingled, each one stirred the profoundest depth of the other and from their synthesis, grew the religion of *Bhakti and Tasawwuf*, the religion of love and devotion, which swept the hearts of millions following different religions and sects of India. The currents of Islamic sufism and Hindu Bhakti combined into a

mighty stream which fertilized old desolate tracts and changed the face of the country. It was this spirit of India which achieved apparently an impossible task of reconciling the puritanical severity and awe-inspiring transcendence of Islam into the luxuriant fullness and abundance of forms and the intuitive perception of their immanent unity with Hinduism, and created those monuments of architecture and painting, music and poetry and love-inspired religion which are the heritage of Indian history during the middle ages.

A harmonious study of Indian History, a study both wide and deep, seem urgently called for now more than ever before. The question arises : can we cut up history into little bits, and say : this is ancient history, this is medieval and that is modern history ? The central doctrine of the modern scientific study of history, according to the great Oxford Professor Freeman's teaching is, the unity and continuity of history. The theory is supported by Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, who says—(I quote) "we cannot divide history of India into the three water-tight compartments, namely the Hindu period, the Mohammadan period and the British period. Nothing can be more absurd. In the first place they should be either Hindu, Muhammadan and Christian, or ancient, medieval and modern. The first is a communal division of Indian history and should be banished from all history books for ever. The second classification may be resorted to for convenience of study, especially for the study of culture. But it should be invariably borne in mind that although in the world of thought there may be a temporary division of history for the sake of specialisation, in the world of action history ought to be treated as having a continuous

sequence. This, in fact, is the basic idea of history, as any student of historiography will tell us." (I unquote)

Let us consider the factors that are responsible for continuously aggravating disunity, disharmony and disintegration between (Indian) communities. The underlying primary cause is mis-understanding. This mis-understanding takes many forms and expresses itself in numerous ways. It inspires the interpretation of Indian history and makes it possible for extremists on both sides to press the distortion of historical facts and movements into service to uphold their different theories. The distrust affects our judgment of men and their motives and exaggerates every intentional or unintentional neglect into a deliberate piece of oppression, and every petty incident of a quarrel or suppression of a breach of law and order into a calculated piece of atrocity. This suspicion colours the whole outlook upon life : every little difference of customs, manners, modes of speech and dress, ways of living and of vocational pursuits is magnified into profound difference of culture—of economic, social political and spiritual ideals. Is there any wonder that every clash of personal and of group ambition is regarded as a symptom of deep social cleavage and of communal and cultural disharmony ?

The task is not easy, because unfortunately the histories of India which have been taught in our schools and colleges for generations past were originally compiled by European writers. And Indians have not yet succeeded in shaking off the biases inculcated by their European teachers. These so-called histories have produced indelible impressions on the minds of their readers and corrupted the springs of national life. They have laid emphasis on difference, drawn pictures



in which the relations between Hindus and Musalmans bear most prominently the marks of violence, conquest, rapine and religious bigotry. They have presented the Muslims as destroyers of Hindu culture and traditions, despoilers of Hindu temples and palaces ; and brutal idol-breakers who have offered to their Hindu victims the terrible alternative of conversion or the sword.

It is hardly surprising that educated men in India drugged with such poisonous stuff from the most impressionable period of their lives grow up to suspect and distrust each other. The Hindu has been brought to believe that the Muslim period of Indian history, which extends over eight hundred years and more, is a nightmare. Not only does he feel no pride in it but when he turns back his mind to find inspiration in the past he skips over this long interval and draws highly idealised pictures of the golden past which lies beyond. The Muslim on the other hand having lost the power built-up by his co-religionists to a Christian nation from the West and being regarded as a mere intruder by the Hindus, naturally feeds his self-respect upon deeds by which he won conquest and glory and completely ignores the remoter past which moulded his cultural achievement of which he ought to be justly proud. How British historians have used these sentiments would be clear from the following quotation from the well-known compilation, Sir. H. M. Eliot's "*History of India as told by its Own Historians.*" The passage occurs in the general preface to volume I. (I quote.)

"We behold kings sunk in sloth or debauchery and emulating the vices of Caligula or a Commodus.

"Under such rulers we cannot wonder that the fountains of justice are corrupted : that the state revenues are never

collected without violence and outrage ; that villages are burnt and their inhabitants mutilated or sold into slavery ; that the officials so far from affording protection, are themselves the chief robbers and usurpers ; that parasites and eunuchs revel in the spoils of plundered provinces, and that the poor find no redress against the oppressor's wrong and proud man's contumely. The few glimpses we have even among the short extracts of this single volume, of Hindus slain for disputing with Muhammadans, of general prohibitions against processions, worship or ablutions and other intolerant measures, of idols mutilated, of temples razed, of forcible conversions and marriages, of proscriptions and confiscations, of murders and massacres and of the sensuality and drunkenness of the tyrants who enjoined them, show us that this picture is not overcharged." (I unquote).

A glimpse into official British records will show how the policy of *Divide-et-Impera* was taking shape. The secretary of State Wood in a letter to Lord Elgin said : "We have maintained our power in India by playing-off one part against the other and we must continue to do so. Do all you can, therefore, to prevent all having a common feeling." (Wood Papers : Wood to Elgin, March 3. 1862).

George Francis Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, wrote to Curzon, "I think the real danger to our rule in India not now but say 50 years hence is the gradual adoption and extension of Western ideas of agitation, and, if we could break educated Indians into two sections holding widely different views, we should, by such a division, strengthen our position against the subtle and continuous attack which the spread of education must make upon our system of government. We should so plan the educational text-books



that the differences between community and community are further strengthened" (Hamilton to Gurzon, 26 March, 1888 .

Cross informed the Governor-General, Dufferin, that "This division of religious feeling is greatly to our advantage and I look for some good as a result of your Committee of Inquiry on India Education and on teaching material." (Cross to Dufferin, 14. January, 1887).

Thus under a definite policy the Indian history text-books were so falsified and distorted as to give an impression that the medieval period of India history was full of atrocities committed by Muslim rulers on their Hindu subjects and the Hindus had to suffer terrible indignities under Muslim rule. And there were no common factors in social, political or economic life.

Now let us briefly examine the truth of these allegations. Let us see what the contemporary Muslim historians say :

Qazi Mughis-ud-Din laments : (I quote).

"Although in the medieval period the head of the State in India was a Muslim, the State was not Islamic The State did not follow the injunctions of the holy scriptures - The *Quran*, the *Hadith*, or the laws elaborated in the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence. It is a mistake to call medieval state in India, theocratic, for it did not function under the guidance of the Muslim theologians." (unquote).

Almost everyone of the Muslim monarchs of India from the 13th century onwards expressed his inability and indicated the impossibility of conducting government in accordance with *Shariat*. Iltutamish, Balban, Allauddin khalji and Mohammad Tughlak were among the pre-Mughal sovereigns of India who questioned the suitability of applying

Muslim law to India. Zia-ud-Din Barni, a historian in his *Fatawa-i Fahandari*, says : (I quote).

True religion consists in following on the foot-steps of the Prophet. But royal government on the contrary, can only be carried on by following the policies of Khusro Parvez and great emperors of Iran." (unquote).

He admits that :—(I quote).

"Between the traditions (*Sunnat*) of the Prophet, Muhammad and his mode of life and living and the customs of the Iranian emperors and their mode of life and living there is a complete contradiction and total opposition." (unquote).

But he pointed out that *Shariat*, which is the command of God, could be followed in State matters only in exceptional times. Muhammad succeeded in enforcing *shara* because he was directly inspired by God, the first four Khalifas did so because they had been the associates of the Prophet. But prophethood is a perfection of religion and the kingship is the perfection of worldly fortune. These two perfections are opposed and contradictory to each other, and their combination is not within the bounds of possibility.

Nizam-ud-Din, observes : (I quote) :

"Bulban gave precedence to the affairs of the State over religion." (*Tabquat-i-Akbari*) (Vol 1, p. 82) (unquote).

Burni states : (I quote) :

"In the matter of punishment and exercise of royal

authority he acted without fear of God and whatever he regarded to be in the interest of government, irrespective of whether it was in accord with *Shara* or not, he carried into action" (*Tarikh-i-Shahi*). (unquote).

Allaudin Khalji's discussion with Qazi Mughis-ud-Din is well-known, His parting reply to the Qazi was : (I quote) :

"Whatever I consider to be in the interest of Government, I order. I do not know what the Exalted God will do to me on the day of Ressurrection." (unquote).

Prof. M. Habib says : (I quote) :

"It is true that Muslim kings, mostly of foreign extraction, sat on Indian thrones for some six or seven centuries. But they could only do so because their enthronment was not the enthroment of the Muslim rule. Had it been otherwise they could not have lasted for a single generation." (*Medieval India Quarterly*, op. cit. p. 5. (unquote).

Socially the Musalmans of India developed an organisation similar to that of the Hindu. Muslim societies in India, unlike in other countries, became divided into castes comparable with the Hindu caste system, These distinctions also became heredity.

In every social system woman holds a characteristic position. Arab and Turkish societies differ considerably from Hindu society in this matter. Yet in India the Muslims followed not the customs of Arabia and Turkistan but those of India. In toilet, dress, ornaments, ways of

social intercourse and daily routine of life, they adopted Indian ways and manners. The Muslim marriage ceremonies were adopted from Hinduism. *Nisbat, Haldi, Menhdi, Tel, Mandwa, Barat, Jalwa, Kangan*, etc. were Muslim adaptations of Hindu ceremonies. The only difference that remained was that in the Hindu marriage bride and bridegroom went round the fire to the chanting of Vedic mantras, while in the Muslim marriage they were joined together in bonds of matrimony by the *Qazi* who read appropriate verses from the *Quran*. Early marriage of girls, prohibition of widow marriage, dependence and subordination of woman and the use of the veil were common to the Muslims.

The Muslims adopted many Hindu funeral ceremonies, for example, the *Tija* the *Daswan* etc. Then the ceremonies concerning pregnancy and child birth like the seventh month, *Satmasa*, sixth day of childbirth, *Chhalhi*, the shaving of the child's head, *Mundan*, *Aqiqah*, licking of *Khir*, *Khir Chatai*, boring of ears, *Konchhedan*, birthday anniversary, *Salgirah* etc., were common to both. Even such purely Hindu practices as the immolation of the widow on the death of her husband and *Jauhar* were occasionally resorted to by the Muslims. Ibn Batuta relates the story of the defeat of Ainul mulk by Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and tells how his wife plunged into death after her husband.

Again, the *Zafar Namah* describes the *Jauhar* committed by the wife of Kamaluddin, Governor of Bhatnair, when he proceeded to fight against Timur. Amir Khusro's admiration is evident from his famous lines :—

The dress is the most outstanding expression of the inner character of a society, of its grades and classes, of its psycho-

logical values, taboos and reticences. From this point of view, it is important to notice how the Muslims in India discarded the garments worn in Arabia, Iran and Central Asia and mainly adopted the Indian costumes and clothes. The use of Arab *Amama*, *Jubba*, *Rada*, *Tahmod*, and *Tasma*, and of the Central Asian *Kulah*, *Nima*, *Moza*, etc., disappeared, giving place to Hindu *pagari* and *chira*, *Kurta* and *Angarukha*, *Patka* and *Dupatta*, *Paijama* and *Juta*.

Now, let me give a few illustrations as to how the historical facts have been distorted.

While I was doing some research on Tippu Sultan in 1928 at Allahabad, some office-bearers of a college Students Union approached me with a request to inaugurate their History Association. They had directly come from the college with their text-books. Incidentally, I glanced through their history text-book. I opened the chapter on Tippu Sultan. One of the sentences that struck me deeply was : "Three thousand Brahmins committed suicide as Tippu wanted to convert them forcibly into the fold of Islam." The author of the text-book was Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Har Prashad Shastri, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Calcutta University. I immediately wrote to Dr. Shastri for the source of his information. After many reminders came the reply that he had taken that fact from the *Mysore Gazetteer*. The *Mysore Gazetteer* was not available either at Allahabad or at the Imperial Library, Calcutta. So I wrote to Sir Brijendra Nath Seal, the then Vice Chancellor of Mysore University, seeking a confirmation of the statement of Dr. Shastri. Sir Brijendra Nath Seal forwarded my letter to Prof. Srikantia, who was then busy editing a new edition of the *Mysore Gazetteer*. Prof. Srikantia informed

me that the episode of the suicide of 3,000 Brahmins is nowhere in the *Mysore Gazetteer* and he, as student of history of Mysore, was quite certain that no such incident had taken place. He further informed me that the Prime Minister of Tippu Sultan was a Brahmin, named Purnea and his Commander-in-chief was also a Brahmin, named Krishna Rao. He supplied me with the list of 156 temples to which Tippu Sultan used to pay annual grants. He sent me 30 photostat copies of Tippu Sultan's letters addressed to the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Sringeri Math with whom Tippu Sultan had very cordial relations. Tippu Sultan, as was customary with the rulers of Mysore, daily visited the temple of Lord Ranganatha located inside the fort of Srirangapatnam before taking his breakfast. Prof. Srikantia suggested that Dr. Shastri might have based his narrations on the so-called "History of Mysore." by Col. Miles, who claimed to have translated his "History of Tippu Sultan" from a Persian manuscript which was said to be in the Personal Library of Queen Victoria. On investigation, it was found that there was no such manuscript in the library of Queen Victoria most of the facts in Col. Miles's history book were concocted and false Dr. Shastri's book was approved as a course book of history for high schools in Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, U.P., M.P. and Rajasthan. I approached Sir Ashutosh Chaudhary, the then Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University, and sent him all the correspondence that I had exchanged with Dr. Shastri, with Mysore University Vice Chancellor, Sir Brajendra Nath Seal, and Prof. Srikantia, with the request to take proper action against the offending passages in the text-book. Prompt came the reply from Sir Ashutosh

Chaudhary, that the history book by Dr. H. P. Shastri has been put out of course.

However, I was amazed to find the same suicide story was still existing in the history text-books which had been prescribed for Junior high schools in U. P. for the students of VI, VII and VIII Classes.

Similarly, when I was the Chairman of the Allahabad municipality, a case of *Dakhil Kharij* came up for my consideration. It was the case of a dispute over the property dedicated to the temple of Someshwar Nath Mahadev. After the death of the mahant, there were two claimants for the property. One of the claimants filed some documents which were in the possession of the family. The documents were the *farmans* issued by Emperor Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb conferred a *Jagir* and a cash gift on the temple. I felt puzzled. I thought that the *farmans* were fake. I was wondering how Aurangzeb, who was famous for the demolishing of the temples, could confer a *jagir* on a temple with the words that "the jagir was being conferred for the *puja* and *bhog* of the deity." How could Aurangzeb identify himself with idolatry ? I felt sure that the documents were not genuine. But before coming to any conclusion, I thought it proper to take the opinion of Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who was a great scholar of Persian and Arabic. I laid the documents before him and asked for his opinion. After examining the documents, Dr. Sapru said that these *farmans* of Aurangzeb were absolutely genuine. Then he asked his munshi to bring the file of the case of Jangum Badi Shiva Temple of Varanasi, the case of which was lying in the Allahabad High Court for the past 15 Years. The mahant of the Jangum Badi Shiva temple was also in posses-

ssion of various other farmans of Aurangzeb granting Jagir to the temple. That was a new image of Aurangzeb appeared before me. I was thoroughly surprised. As advised by Dr. Sapru, I sent letters to the mahants of various important temples of India requesting them to send me photostat copies, if they are in the possession of the farmans of Aurangzeb, granting them Jagir for their temples. Another big surprise was in store for me. I received copies of farmans of Aurangzeb from the great temples of Mahakaleshwara Ujjain, Balaji Temple Chitrakut, Umanand Temple, Gauhati and the Jain temple of Shatrunjai and other temples and Gurdwaras scattered over northern India. This farmans were issued from 1065 AH 1659) to 1091 AH (1685).

Though these are only a few instances of Aurangzeb's generous attitude towards Hindus and their temples, they are enough to show that what the historians have written about him was biased and is only one side of the picture. India is a vast land with thousands of temples scattered all over. If proper research is made, I am confident, many more instances would come to light which will show Aurangzeb's benevolent treatment of non-Muslims.

But there are instances which prove beyond doubt that Aurangzed did order demolition of Vishwanath temple at Varanasi and the Jama Masjid at Golkunda and the reasons that were given out for the demolition of the temple and the mosque may give benefit of circumstances to Aurangzeb. The story regarding demolition of Vishwanath temple is that while Aurangzeb was passing near Varanasi on his way to Bengal, the Hindu Rajas in his retinue requested that if the halt was made for a day, their Ranis may go to Varanasi, have a dip in the Ganges and pay their homage to Lord

Vishwanath, Aurangzed readily agreed. Army pickets were posted on the five-mile route to Varanasi. The Ranis made a journey on the *Palkis*. They took their dip in the Ganges and went to the Vishwanath temple to pay their homage. After offering Puja all the Ranis returned except one, the Maharani of Kachh. A thorough search was made of the temple precincts but the Rani was to be found nowhere, when Aurangzeb come to know of it, he was very much enraged. He sent his senior officers to search for the Rani. Ultimately, they found that the statue of Ganesh which was fixed in the wall was a movable one. When the statue was moved, they saw a fleet of stairs that led to the basement. To their horror, they found the missing Rani dishonoured and crying. The basement was just beneath Lord Vishwanath's seat. The Hindu justice. The case was Rajas expressed their vociferous protests. They demanded very grave. Aurangzeb ordered that the sacred precincts have been despoiled. Lord Vishwanath may be moved to some other place. The temple be razed to the ground and the Mahant be arrested and punished.

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, in his famous book, "*The Feathers and the Stones*" has narrated this fact based on documentary evidence. Dr. P. L. Gupta, former Curator of Patna Museum has also narrated this incident.

Now, about the Jama Masjid ; The Ruler of Golkunda, the famous Tanashah, after collecting revenues of the State, did not pay his dues to Delhi. In a few years they were accumulated into crores. Tanashah buried this *khazana* and erected a Jama Masjid over it. When Aurangzeb came to know of it, he ordered the demolition of the mosque. The buried *khazana* was seized and utilised for the benefit

of the people. These two examples are sufficient to show that Aurangzeb did not make any distinction between a temple and a mosque in coming to a judicial finding.

Now, about Shivaji : many Muslim historians have paid tributes to Shivaji's secular policy. Khafi khan has written the life of Shivaji. His father was a contemporary of Shivaji. He has paid glowing tributes to Shivaji's generous religious policies towards the Muslims, and the holy Quran. Another historian, Bashiruddin Ahmed, has corroborated this fact. A.F.M. Abdul Ali has also recorded that Shivaji was generous towards his Muslim subjects. Hindu and the Muslim had the same rights in his reign. He never differentiated between his Hindu subjects and Muslim subjects. Sheikh Haider Qazi was his private and confidential Secretary. He kept all his records and drafted his correspondence. His personal body guard was a Muslim. Siddi Hambal and Siddi Billal were his generals and one of his Naval Rear Admiral was a Muslim. Shivaji was not against the Central Delhi Power. His correspondence with Aurangzeb, preserved in Parasnis Library amply proves this. Shivaji fought for certain rights—the right to collect *Chauth* and the right to mint his currency.

It may be noted that Shivaji's grand father was a great admirer of a Muslim Saint Shah Sharafudin. He named both his sons after the saint ; his eldest son as Shahji and his younger son as Sharafji. Shahji was the father of Shivaji. Shivaji himself had great reverence for a Muslim saint Baba Yakut of Kalsi.

Take the case of Rana Pratap. His war with Akbar on the battle-field of Haldighati is characterised as the religious war. The facts are that the army of Akbar con-



sisting of 40,000 Rajputs and 60,000 Mughals was commanded by Raja Man Singh. Likewise, the army of Rana Pratap included a large contingent of Pathans commanded by Hakim Khan Sur. Taj Khan, the Pathan Raja of Jalaur, joined the army of Rana Pratap with his one thousand cavalry regiment. Rana Pratap's army had nearly 40,000 Rajputs in the battle-field of Haldi Ghati, the Rajputs were fighting against Rajputs and Pathans were fighting against Mughals without giving any quarter to any one. How could this battle be described as the battle between Islam and Hinduism ? It was a battle between a Central Power and a Regional Power. We salute Rana Pratap for his bravery and for his love for freedom, but in no sense of the term his war can be described as religious war between Hinduism and Islam.

Let us take the case of Guru Gobind Singh. Amongst his followers were included hundreds of Muslims. The area where Guru Gobind Singh established his political seat was commanded by a number of Hill Rajas. With the growth of power of Guru Gobind Singh, the peasants began to pay their revenues to Guru Gobind Singh instead of Rajas. This was the cause of the conflict between the Guru and the Rajas. Rajas sought help from the Subedar at Sirhind, who sent his army to help the Rajas. The combined army of the Nawab of Sirhind and Hindu Rajas proved ineffective. Then, help was sought from the Emperor at Delhi. Thus indirectly it became a conflict between Delhi and the Guru, resulting in great hardships to Guru Gobind Singh. Two of his sons were betrayed to the enemy by his personal cook named, Gangaram, in lure of the reward. The Regional Council on behalf of the Delhi Emperor was running the administration

of this region. There were three members of the Regional Council. The Nawab of Sirhind, his Hindu Vazir Suchanand Kursidar and the Nawab of Malerkotla, with two votes to one, the sons of Guru Gobind Singh were put to death. The Nawab of Malerkotla pleaded in vain that the sons be allowed to go free. Afterwards, Guru Gobind Singh felt so thankful to the Nawab of Malerkotla that he issued an injunction that no Sikh would ever enter the territory of Malerkotla with arms on. Incidentally, Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's army inadvertently passed through the territory of Malerkotla. Someone reminded the Maharaja of the injunction of the tenth Guru. Maharaja felt sorry and ordered his army to put down their arms. He sent a messenger to the Nawab of Malerkotla with a message "myself and my army has committed a crime of passing through your territory with arms. We have violated the injunction of the tenth Guru and we stand here as your *Mujrim*s and seek punishment from You." The Nawab replied : "You are a great Maharaja and I am a humble Nawab, how can I punish you ?" But on the insistence of the Maharaja he accepted a fine of Rs. 100/—.

Ghani Khan and General Syed Beg along with their thousands of Muslim followers fought on the side of Guru Gobind Singh in those delicate Years. Pir Badruddin of Sadhaura along with his two brothers, four sons and a thousand strong Muslim army fought for the Guru and sacrificed their lives.

Relations between the Sikh Gurus and the Muslims were very cordial. When the Golden Temple of Amritsar was being built, the Sikh Guru invited the great Muslim Saint, Miyan Mir, to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple. A batch of prominent Sikh Sardars went to Lahore

from Amritsar and brought the Muslim saint on a *Palki* carried on their shoulders all the way from Lahore.

During Ranjit Singh's reign, Muslims enjoyed equal rights, His Prime Minister was a Muslim and two of his favourite queens were Muslims. Till his death, the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs lived in perfect harmony in his territory.

In the light of the above facts, it is imperative that the teaching of Medieval and Modern Indian history should be re-oriented so that future generations of the country may be saved from entertaining bias and hatred towards each other.

I am sorry to submit that these facts are no-where mentioned in the text-books of history. Sir, I conclude with the words of Gandhiji, (I quote) :

“We have chapter and Verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussalman historians to say that we were living in the medieval period in comparative peace and harmony. It was not like that as has been shown to us in the British history.” (unquote).

SULTANS OF BENGAL : CHARGE OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Rokeya Rahman Kabeer

Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumder in his preface to the Delhi Sultanate explains in detail the editorial policy. The present volume, he observes, "is responsible for clearly bringing out in detail those points of difference which stood between the Hindus and Muslims and served to keep them effectively as two separate units in their common motherland¹". He condemns the attitude of those historians who have tried to explain away or minimise these difference for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of the sister community (Muslims) and have refused to make "pointed references to the oppressive acts of bigoted Muslim rulers like Firuz Tughluq and Sikander Lodi even though proved by the unimpeachable testimony of their own confessions²." A historian, he feels, must strive to find the truth, so far as it can be deduced from reliable evidence and express it without fear, envy, malice, passion or prejudice and irrespective of all extraneous considerations, both political and humane.³

Dr. Majumdar's view of the responsibility of a historian is praiseworthy. It is, however, disappointing to notice that he fails to live up to the blameless ideal he sets up. In

1. Majumder, R. C. and others, ed : History and Culture of the Indian Peoples : Vol. VI : The Delhi Sultanate : P. XXXI.

2. Idem.

3. Ibid, p. XXX.



his account of the status of the Hindus under the Muslim Sultans of Bengal⁴ he emphasizes and exaggerates the conflicts racial and religious, between the two communities and does less than justice to the relevant evidence.

Dr. Majumder depends exclusively on the medieval religious literature as source material for his review of the political and religious conditions under which Hindus were forced to live when Muslims conquered Bengal. He puts great stress on the reliability of Vaisnava literature as a historical document because : "These Vaisnavas were the most inoffensive and peaceful members of Hindu community and their views cannot be regarded, by any stretch of imagination, to be tinged by political and racial bias of any kind¹."

But were the Vaisnava writers of Medieval Bengal really free from all bias ? Tapan Kumar Raychoudhury in Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir, however, describes the Vaisnavas as intolerant and sectarian : "The Vaisnava authors pronounced a universal anathema against all who did not belong to their sect. Pasandi a term which literally means 'evil ones', was the epithet applied to all such, including everyone who looked on Brahma, Siva or other deities as equals of Narayana or refused to honour Chaitanya infliction of dire punishment such as leprosy on the bitterest opponents of Chaitanya and his followers is mentioned in Vaisnava literature as a warning to erring men²." The Sakta-Tantric

4. Ibid p 631.

1. Idem.

2. Tapan kumar Raychoudhury : Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir, p. 117-118.

cult, a living and powerful force in the 15th and 16th centuries, was particularly abhorred by the Vaisnavas and there are several abusive references to religious practices of the Saktas in wellknown Vaisnava works³. The Vaisnavas seemed to have been equally intolerant of the Muslims. Nityanandasa in his Premavilasa referred to Muslim rule as the root of all evils. Jayananda mentioned the adoption of Muslim habits by Brahmins as one of the aspects of the manifold degradation characteristic of the kali age.⁴ Rupa and Sanatana, two important officers under Hussain Shah of Bengal, who later became devotees of Chaitanya, considered themselves 'fallen' because of their contact with the Muslims.⁵ Thus Dr. Majumdar's claim that Vaisnava writers were free from prejudice is not supported by evidence.

In order to show how miserable the plight of the Hindus were, Dr. Majumdar quotes the following passage from Jayananda's Chaitanya Mangala : "The Numerous Yavanas (Muslims) who reside in Piralya village ruined the Brahmanas. The feud between the Yavanas and the Brahmanas is everlasting, and the terrible village of Piralya is close to Navadvipa. Misled by the false report of (the people of) Piralya that a Brahmana was destined to be the king of Navadvipa—the king (of Gauda) ordered the destruction of Nadiya (Nayadvipa). Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya left Gauda with his family and fled to Orissa where he was honoured by its ruler Prataparudra."¹

3. Narottam Vilas, ed. Narahari Chakravarty, Canto VIII; D. C. Sen : History of Bengali Language and Literature, p. 412.

4. Jayananda's Chaitanya Mangal-Nadia Kanda.

5. Sukumar Sen—Bangla Sahityer Itihas, Pratham Khanda, Purbardha, p. 592.

1. Majumdar, R. C. and others op. cit. The Delhi Sultanate, p. 632.

But Dr. Majumdar leaves out the significant part of the story. Jayananda also relates how the Brahmanas of Nadia were saved. The Goddess Kali, according to him, appeared to the Sultan in a dream and threatened to destroy him and his family unless he refrained from persecuting the Brahmanas. The frightened Yavana king repented his actions and promised not to repeat them again.²

In his use of this story the learned historian has made no allowance for popular myth-making, nor does he seem to be aware that any mythmaking is involved here.

By the middle of the 16th century quite a mass of legend had grown round the name of Chaitanya. Most of his biographers had accepted him as an avatara and were anxious to identify him with Srikrishna³ even going so far as to make the young Chaitanya steal the clothes of his 'bhaktas,'⁴ on the analogy of young Krisna who stole the clothes of his gopinis. Under the circumstances it is hardly surprising that the zealous devotees of Chaitanya would try to establish other parallels between the lives of the avataras. Just before the birth of Krsna, Kamsa, king of Mathura had tried to counteract the prophesy that he would be killed by Devaki's child by ordering the extermination of every new-born baby in Mathura. The Sultan of Gauda in Chaitanya Mangala tries the same method to undo the rumour and others the destruction of Brahmins of Navadvipa. Apparently the author of Chaitanya Mangala needed a counterpart of Raja Kamsa to fill in his myth and who but

2. Asit kumar Bandyopadyaya ; Bengla Sahityer Itivritya, p. 400.

3. Ibid., p. 356-359.

4. Ibid., p. 313.

the powerful Sultan of Gauda would be chosen to supply the need ?

Dr. Majumdar describes in detail the outrages committed on the Hindus and quotes an instance from Vijayagupta's *Manasa Mangala*. Hassan and Hussain (Muslim qazis) "made a pastime of baiting the Hindus in all possible way. Any-one found with the sacred Tulasi leaf on his head (an obligatory Vaisnava custom) was taken to the qazi with hands and feet bound, and heavy blows were administered to him. The Piyada (peon) tore away the sacred thread from a Brahman and spat saliva in his mouth. On one occasion a Muslim mulla happened to pass by a hut in a wood where some shepherd boys were worshipping the goddess Manasa with the symbol of sacred earthen pots to the accompaniment of music. In righteous indignation the mulla made an attempt to break the pots, but was severely trounced. The mulla brought it to the notice of the two quzi brothers who exclaimed : "What ! the scoundrel (haram-zadah) Hindus make so bold as to perform Hindu rituals in my village ! The culprit boys should be seized and made outcast by being forced to eat Muslim bread". So the two brothers gathered a large number of armed Muslims and proceeded towards the shepherd's hut. The mother of the qazis, a Hindu girl forcibly married by the former qazi, vainly tried to dissuade her sons ; they demolished the shepherd's hut, and broke the sacred pots into pieces, and threw away the offerings to the goddess. The affrighted boys had concealed themselves in the wood, but some of them were hunted out and seized."

The story of Hassan, Hussain seems to be rather popular with the *Manasa Mangal* writers ; nearly all of them have

referred to it, while Bipradasa, in his *Manasa Vijaya*, has written in detail about the qazi brothers. The concluding part of the story is that the goddess Manasa, furious with the qazi brothers and their Muslim followers, decided to punish them. Hussain and the Muslim companions were bitten by snakes and were killed, while Hassan was burnt severely by his own wife, who was tricked into it by Manasa. Bewildered by this turn of events Hassan's wife started lamenting loudly. Manasa then appeared on the scene and ordered Hassan to worship her. Hassan agreed and worshipped her with great devotion. Manasa gave back life to his brother and all the other Muslims. Grateful Hassan brought Gunavanta Silpakar (skilled craftsmen) and built a beautiful stone temple for the goddess¹.

Manasa Mangal comprises three parts, the birth of the goddess, her marriage; Manasa's quest for human devotees whom she found among cowherds, Muslim farmers and the family of a fisherman; the final part of the poem deals with cognition by Chand, the great merchant prince. The divinity of the gods depended on their recognition by man; consequently Manasa eager to secure human devotees had recourse to ungod-like trickery. *Manasa Mangal* is the story of the final triumph of the goddess Manasa who not only subdued the simplest and weakest elements of the society but also managed to achieve her final objective, that is, her recognition by the most powerful class, namely, the merchant class.

At this stage it is important to emphasise the nature of the material with which we are dealing. Dr. Sukumar

1. Asit kumar Bandyopadhyaya : op. cit. p. 112-113.

Sened, the eminent historian of Bengali literature, does not have any doubt that the story of Manasa is a result of the popular integration of certain legends and myths². Dr. Majumdar draws upon these very legends and myths as if they are historical documents to establish the fanatical and oppressive character of Muslim rule in Bengal. How he can be so definite in his conclusion when he has only the mythical story of Hussain and Hassen to base his arguments on, is difficult to understand. No doubt the Manasa Mangal Kavya, like any other Mangal Kavya of the period, does throw occasional light on the social conditions prevailing at the time. But it is obvious that in the present state of our knowledge any conclusion is bound to be speculative in character. From the story mentioned above we can at most conclude that the worship of local deity like Manasa, the snake goddess, was quite popular among the simple village folks, both Hindus and Muslims, and that the government representatives at the village level and their Piyadas tended to bully and exploit the helpless villagers and aspect of their character which has hardly changed even in our time. But to claim that this mythical story also shows up the ruthless character of the Muslim rule in Bengal, is to strain the relevant material too much.

Dr. Majumdar would like to disabuse his readers of the notion that Sultan Hussain Shah of Bengal, had a tender heart for the Hindus.¹ In fact, he insists that far from improving, the relationship the Hindus and Muslim worsened during his reign, although he is generally regarded

2. Sukumar Sen, History of Bengali Literature, p. 50.

1. Majumdar, R. C. and others : op. cit. p. 634-35.



as the most liberal minded Muslim ruler of Bengal. This assumption is based on certain incidents referred to in contemporary Vaisnava literature.

According to Chaitanya Bhagavat, says Dr. Majumdar, admirers of Chaitanya who were at the Sultan's court were not convinced of the liberalism of Hussain Shah and feared that he might change his mind at any moment because of the evil counsels of his Muslim officials. For this reason they wanted Chaitanya to leave the vicinity of the capital where he had come to meet some of his devotees.² But beside this expression of suspicion and fears there is not even an incidental reference anywhere in Vaisnava literature that Hussain Shah did actually change his attitude towards Chaitanya or his followers. On the contrary it is recorded in the Chaitanya Bhagavati that the Sultan gave express orders not to harass Chaitanya in any way : "Let him stay wherever he likes ; let him rule in the light of his own faith. Let him sing Kirtan happily with all. Let him live in seclusion or however he pleases. Qazi and Kotwal, whoever tries to interfere with him will be punished with death".¹ We are also told by the author of Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita that the Muslim ruler of Gauda on hearing that the multitudes flocked around Chaitanya as his disciples, declared that he was truly an apostle because people followed him without any thought of gain. Hence quzis and Muslims should practise no hostility towards the Vaisnava who must have perfect liberty to preach his creed³.

It was not only Chaitanya who had complete freedom to pursue his religious activities in public. His followers

2. Ibid., p. 634.

1.

2.



too had the same privilege. We come to know from Chaitanya's biographers that after Chaitanya's departure from Bengal Nityananda and Adaitacharyya were entrusted with the responsibility of carrying on with the Master's work in the province. Brndavanadasa specially mentions in his Chaitanya Bhagavata that after Chaitanya had settled in Puri, Nityananda was accepted as the leader of the Vaisnava sect in Kirtan parties parading the streets of Navadvipa, Satgaon, Panihati, Khardaha, Uddharanpur, Shantipur, Naihati and other important towns of Bengal, singing and dancing wildly in a mood of ecstasy.¹ Neither Brndavanadasa nor any other Vaisnava writer, however, speaks of any attempt made by the Muslim Sultans to interfere with this form of devotion in public.

In view of this it is difficult to take seriously Dr. Majumder's conclusion that the Hindus had to live in perpetual dread of the religious bigotry and intolerance of the Muslims even during the rule of Hussain Shah.

Finally, and inevitably, Dr. Majumdar charges Hussain Shah with destroying temples, a charge so often brought against Muslim rulers in India to show their intolerant character; "This Hussain Shah had destroyed numerous temples in Orissa²."

From contemporary sources we come to know that the kings of Orissa had carried on persistent warfare with the Muslim Sultans of Bengal, extending their frontiers to Bengal whenever they had found a weak Sultan on throne. Even Hussain Shah's reign was not free from trouble. Hostilities were intermittent along the southern border

1. Asitkumar Bandopadhyaya : op. cit., p. 220.

2. Majumdar, R. C. and other ad. : The Delhi Sultanate, p. 634



throughout his reign. If temples were destroyed it was done during the raids which the Sultan's army carried out in the enemy territory

A historian of the eminence of Dr. Majumder is surely aware that plundering and destruction of temples were no rare occurrence in the history of India. But the underlying cause of such acts was hardly religious. These were the necessary concomitants of ancient warfare and were not unknown even to the Hindus. It must be pointed out that we know more about the iconoclastic activities of the Muslim rulers of India, because the contemporary Muslim historians have left records of them. If the Ghaznavide historians and their successors had not transmitted the story of the havoc wrought by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Hindus would have no memory of it.

The student of the pre-Muslim period of Indian history is handicapped by the lack of dependable source materials because Hindus, for all their great literary heritage, have produced no historical writers comparable to Barani or Abul Fazl. But no doubt that Hindu kings had little inhibition in the matter of appropriating temple property whether in conquered territory or in their own. We find one west Chalukyan inscription formally accusing the Chola king of having burnt a Jaina temple in the Belvola province. The Vaisnavas of the south level similar charges against the Cholas¹. The Chronicle of Kalhana tells us of the great Harsa, the cultured Hindu king of Kashmir (1089-1101 A.D.) patron of Sanskrit poetry and himself a poet who systema-

1. Narayan Chandra Bandopadhyaya : Development of Hindu Policy and Political Theories, p. 178.

tically looted temple property, had the images removed, publicly defiled and melted down under a special officer, named "minister for uprooting gods (devotpatana-nayaka)". The need for money to pay the army which was then engaged in a Kashmir was always in short supply, was the only reason for such actions. The Hindus, Brahmins or not, took all this rather calmly sharing in profits, wherever possible². No theollogical necessity was adduced or needed. Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, a supremely realistic manual on statecraft, never made the mistake of treating political problems in terms of either ethical standard or of religious dogmas. Kautilya's king assumed the status of a great sovereign not by divine sanction but by conquering the whole world 'with the help of the best fitted elements of his sovereignty'—a prosperous treasury and a strong army. That is why in the *Arthasastra* the state profited without any scruple from every source—even going to the extent of appointing special officers (devatadhyaksa) whose duty it was to appropriate for the king's treasury the property of temples, religious institution and monastic orders, on the plea of safe-keeping. Miracles were invented and new cult objects were set up by disguised officers in state pay to encourage the credulous masses to bring gifts to the temples in order to augment the state's gain.

If similar spoliation of temples took place with the coming of the Muslims there is no justification to assume that these were acts of religious fanaticism. Accumulation of wealth whether in the royal palaces or in the houses of worship had always provoked raids, motive being mainly gain. The concupiscence of kings and invading armies has always taken

2, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* ; a Chronicle of the kings of Kashmir ;
tr. by M. Auriel Stein, 2 Vols. pp. 1103-7.



this form everywhere. Muslim rulers, including Hussain Shah, by plundering temples simply followed an established practice. If religious excuses were offered by them that was to present their exploits and achievements before the people in complimentary colours.

While Dr. Majumdar does not hesitate to resort to the highly perilous procedure of reconstructing history from plain religious fables and myths, he categorically rejects the value of the straightforward praise given by the Hindu writers to the Muslim rulers, as historical evidence, on the ground that their 'fulsome eulogies merely point to their abject surrender and the moral degradation caused by three hundred years of political servitude and religious oppression¹. Curiously enough in doing so he places the great Bengali writers like Krittivas, Maladhar Basu, Vijay Gupta, Yasoraj Khan ect. among the degraded, ¹and even refuses to give Vidyapati the credit of either truthfulness or honesty although Vidyapati was the court poet of the Hindu.

1. B. A. Saletore : Ancient Indian Political Thought and Institution, pp. 426-57.

1. Majumdar, R. C. and others ed. : op. cit., p. 934.

1. a)

(Lord of Guada rules Five-Guadas. Worshipping the Lord of Guada is like worshipping virtue).

b)

(Sultan Hussain Shah, king of kings, is like Arjun in like valour. He is like the early morning sun. He ruled the world by his might. Under his rule his subjects lived happily).

Vijay Gupta's Padma Purna, quoted in Ashutosh Bhattacharyya ; Bengla Mangal Kavyer Itihasa, p. 238.

c) (Hussain Shah is noble king. In all the five Gaudas his fame is widely known, He is well acquainted with the art of warfare. His greatness is limitless. As if he is the incarnation of Lord Krisna in the 'Kali' age.)

Kavindra Paramesvara : Mahabharata

d)

(Father of Nasrat Shah is great king. Like Rama, he looked after the welfare of his subjects. King Hussain Shah is the ruler of this earth, ruling it with equity and justice).
ibid.

e)

(Hussain Shah, the ornament of this world, also appreciates this 'Rasa'. Lord of Five-Gauda is like Lord Indra in his grandeur, says Yasoraj Khan.)

D. C. Sen : Banga Bhasa O Sahitya, 8th edition p. 74. king of Mithila and was under no obligation to praise the Muslim ruler of Gauda.

f)

(Nasir Shah who has been struck by the arrow of Madana (Cudid) also appreciates this (Rasa). Long live Lord of the Five-Gaudas, says Vidyapati).

D. C. Sen : Op. cit., p. 115.

THE CONCEPT OF MUSLIM TYRANNY : AN UNBROKEN TRADITION

Tanika Sarkar

Divine Providence at last, in its abundant mercy, stirred up the English nation to break the yoke of those tyrants (the Muslims), and to receive the oppressed natives of Bengal under its protection.

—Rammohan Roy's Appeal to the King-in-Council against Press Regulations, 1823.

Today the historian, looking backward over the two centuries that have passed since then (Plassey), knows that it was the beginning, slow and unperceived, of a glorious dawn, the like of which the history of the world has not seen elsewhere.

—Sir J. N. Sarkar, Dacca History of Bengal, Volume II, 1948

Throughout the nineteenth century the concept of Muslim tyranny was an ever-recurring theme with individual variations¹. Detailed research (for which I am not equipped) is needed to explain why, when and how this concept was developed. The object of this paper is merely to state a certain position : that, on this one single point, nearly all strands of our nineteenth-century intelligentsia—be it the traditional literati, or the conservatives, or the reformists, or even the radicals—were in agreement. Derived at least partly from early British historians writing about Indian history, this set of assumptions in turn exaggerated, played down, misinterpreted and distorted facts of our so-called "Muslim

period". A natural corollary was the acceptance of foreign rule with actual relief and of the loss of independence as deliverance. This was an important factor in the intelligentsia's inability to think or act outside the imperialist framework, or even to seriously question it ; even their formulation of criticism and grievances implied a tacit acceptance. 1885 in our country saw the beginnings of a certain type of reaction of the intelligentsia to the colonial set-up ; how different was the temper of the Sebolars' Revolt in Annam in the same year ? Even when a genuine nationalist reaction had set in with the Swadeshi times (which, for the first time, actively tried to enlist Muslim support) various ramifications of this attitude continued to pervert its tone and, in the end, blocked its complete triumph.

This attitude towards Muslim rule was not entirely of British making, much as we would like to absolve ourselves from responsibility that way. It came from a deep-seated Hindu separatism, evident even in intellectuals in pre-British times. Bharatchandra, the eighteenth-century court poet of Maharaja Krishnachandra Ray, for instance, has many telling passages to describe Nawabi oppression in the introductory poem in *Annadamangal Kavya*. Even when he comes to the Bargis (who, in his own words, commit exactly the crimes, down to looting temples) he explains it as divine punishment sent upon the Nawabs—(It may be significant that this one-sided approach is absent in Gangaram's *Maharashto-Pu ana*, whose author came from more plebeian origins). But as tracing all possible sources of this attitude is beyond the scope of this article, I shall confine myself to a very rough survey of British history-writing on Muslim India, particularly because such works were an important component of our intelligentsia's approach.

With the growing political involvement of the East India Company in India, historical interest was at first limited to the immediate past and its background—the Muslim period as a whole, with special emphasis on the Mughal period. Quite early in the emerging pattern, some familiar notes had crept in. Alexander Dow, with his background of eighteenth-century Enlightenment and his critical attitude to the Company's misrule, had a deep admiration for what he regarded as the Enlightened Despotism of the Mughols⁴ (It is interesting that he makes no distinction between Akbar and Aurangzeb in their wise and tolerant policy towards Hindu subjects.) Yet he considers the British (who, he admits, have so far a very poor record to show in India) and not the Indians themselves to be the true successors of this splendid imperial structure. Also however commendable the Mughal achievements had been, Dow never doubted their inherent inferiority to Western civilisation. These two assumptions persisted in all later British historical thinking on India throughout the nineteenth century, but in other respects Dow's treatment was rapidly changed. Jonathan Scott (*Memoris of Eradut Khan*, 1786) was probably the first important historian to develop the theory of Aurangzeb's discriminatory policy and its responsibility for the downfall of the Mughal Empire. "His zeal for the Muhammedan religion", wrote Scott, "led him to deprive the Hindu prince of those indulgences which his less bigoted ancestors had allowed." Gibbon's approach and method had influenced a whole generation of historians, and in his connection, his emphasis on the bigoted, theocratic despotism of the Muslims in general is significant. The Orientalist rediscovery of Hindu civilisation gave a sharper edge to this attitude and

Indian now became synonymous with glorification of the Hindu period⁶." Sri William Jones attributed the downfall of this civilisation to the Muslim conquest and this view was joyously welcomed to explain many features of the present degeneration of the Hindus. With the growing influence of Evangelicals and Utilitarians, there was a shift from the Orientalist position, but even Charles Grant, the Evangelist, used harsher words to describe the Muslim rulers. He spoke of their religious oppression, their more "abandoned morals" and claimed that "perfidy in them was more signal than with Hindus⁷." Thus, a very familiar pattern is seen to be emerging. Mountstuart Elphinstone gave it final shape and colour by his sharp distinction between Akber and Aurangzeb and by describing how Aurangzeb dug his own grave in the Deccan by provoking Maratha nationalism. Finally, Elliot and Downson's avowed object of exposing Muslim misrule has to be studied in the context of the Mutiny and a natural desire of the British historians to justify British imperialism by a wholesale condemnation of the previous imperial system.

This is very roughly the pattern inherited by the Bengali intellectuals, who used this legacy not only without major alterations but also with very much the same intentions—to provide a *raison d'être* to British rule in India. It is significant that they made a somewhat selective use of this inherited material. Though the story of Aurangzeb's bigotry is swallowed wholesale, Akbar's liberalism is not so eagerly stressed. In Swadeshi times, the suggestion of an Akbar festival was quickly overshadowed by the *Birastami brata* and the Shivaji festival⁸. For a long time there is practically no pride in our Islamic heritage. The Bengal Raniss-



ance tried to achieve a synthesis of the Hindu tradition with Western values, but after Rammohan it excluded Persian learning almost entirely which died down very quickly among the Hindus.

How the nineteenth-century intelligentsia reflected this false consciousness will be more clearly shown if I cite some representative passages from the dominant intellectual schools. It is fairly easy to quote the early conservatives (or at a later stage, Bankimchandra) on this issue, for their pathological dislike of the Muslims is well-known. More interesting and significant would be to establish the unity of view of the reformists and radicals with the conservatives, from whom they differed on almost every other social question.

In the intense and prolonged debate on the *Suttee* question there was a remarkable polarisation of social attitudes. But in the various petitions and counter-petitions we find that abhorrence of Muslim rule and loyalty to the British never wavered on either side. An anti-*Suttee* petition by some Hindu inhabitants of Calcutta (published in the *Asiatic Journal*, July 1819) refuted the arguments of the pro-*Suttee* party which claimed that even the Muslim rulers had permitted the practice. In its arguments it recalled "the numberless, insults, cruelties and oppression of Muslim rulers"—the destruction of the Benares temple and the allegedly intolerant spirit of the Koran. Referring to all this, it asked how a Hindu could cite any aspect of Muslim rule as a worthy precedent,"⁹

Samacharchandrika (edited by Bhawanicharan Bandyopadhyay) was the organ of the conservative Dharmasabha which represented the pro-*Suttee* group in the debate. When

the practice was banned it wrote (17 November 1832) in deep distress and indignation : "After she Moosoolmanas had committed many outrages they had set themselves to overthrow religion and were removed. After having experienced many sufferings under the government of the Muslims we had quite for a short time under the *Mlechas*. Now we perceive that they are about to inflict upon us still greater evils."¹⁰ The tone of great bitterness seems to carry a warning but we must remember that the journal had already (2 July 1831) assured the Government that "we believed that the Hindus are far more devoted to their sovereign than any other people."¹¹ *Samacharchandrika* found staunch support in the Tory newspaper John Bull (9 March 1830) which quoted it as saying "we have been subject to on distress under the Government of the Company, it is only the abolition of *Suttees* which has given us disquietude."¹² Apart from the specific question of the *Sutt-e* in which the concept of Muslim tyranny appeared in an indirect manner, the general attitude of the *Samacharchandrika* towards the Muslims is reflected in the way it demanded replacement of Persian in law courts outside Calcutta. It referred to "the haughtiness of these Yavanas" and expressed the hope that "Moosoolmans will be driven out of public jobs" (quoted in India Gazette, 25 December 1831).¹³

The attitude of Rammohun Roy is especially a matter for consideration not only because of his fruitful and creative contact with Western rationalism but also because of his rich knowledge of Persian (his first known work, the *Tuhfatul Kuwahhiddin*, was in Persian) and the undeniable impact of Islam on the evolution of his religious thought. According to Hyde East, he had made himself very unpopular with

orthodox Hindus because of his association with the Muslims, and they suspected him of the heinous crime of having meals with them.

In his Appeal to the King-in-Council against Press Regulations (1823) Rammohun, presents a balance-sheet of the various benefits and evils of Muslim rule against which he evaluates the achievements of British rule. After enumerating an impressive list of advantages enjoyed by the Hindus under the Muslims which are now lost, he decideds to cast his vote for the new regime : "Your Majesty's faithful subjects were consoled by the more secure enjoyments of those civil and religious rights which had been so often violated by the capacity and intolerance of the Mussalmans ; and notwithstanding the loss of political rank and power they considered themselves much happier in the enjoyment of the civil and religious liberty than were their ancestors."¹⁴ Some of these passages at times read disconcertingly like Bankimchandra's. For example, "the Natives of Bengal remained faithful to the existing [Muslim] Government, although their property was often plundered, their religion insulted, and their blood want only shed."¹⁵ And elsewhere "Musulmans.. introduced their own tyrannical system of government destroying temples, universities and all other sacred and literary establishments."¹⁶ Rammohun also makes the conventional distinction, popularised by British historians, between Akbar's and Aurangzeb's policies : Akbar was celebrated for his clemency, for his encouragement learning and for this granting civil and religious liberty to his subjects, and Aurangzebe, for his cruelty and intolerance."¹⁷

Most unexpected and disheartening are the instance of

this attitude among the Derozians, those impatient and radical rebels against Hindu society. Derozio in his search for romantic heroism in the past occasionally turns to Hindu resistance to Muslim invasion—thus anticipating much of later patriotic literature :

The Moslem is come down to spoil the land
The Hindoo hath marched forward to repel
The lawless plunderer of his only shrines,
The savage, rude disturber of his peace.¹⁸

Maresh Chandra Deb's *A Sketch of the Condition of the Hindu Women* (1839) is an exhortation against the degraded status of Hindu women. Its context, style and object reveal him as a very emancipated thinker, but he shares the anti-Muslim slant with his orthodox adversaries : The cause of that state of seclusion in which the females of this land are preserved may be traced to the tyranny of the Mehomedan conquerors." He goes on to quote from an English poem—

The Musselman is raging through the land
Prayer on his tongue and murder in his hand.¹⁹

Pearychand Mitra had a more revivalist stand on the whole, and in his works there is a sharp departure from rammohun's relatively more balanced estimate. In his *State of Hindustan under the Hindoos* (1839-41) he refers to the "ancient Hindu spirit of enterprise which the storm of Muslim oppression has entirely extinguished but which I hope will now be kindled in the new generation, who will.. open sources of employment in to extensive field of commerce,"²⁰ —a strange and ironic hope considering that all such sources that had existed by British economic policy.

The rationalist thinking of Akshoy Kumar Dutta also reveals the related concepts of Muslim tyranny and the

beneficial nature of British imperialism. He writes in *Sangbad Prabhakar* in 1840²¹ ;

Here we might consider how the British rulers were exploiting such sentiments. A Bengali Hurkaru report of 13 February 1843 cites an incident when Dakshinaranjan Mukherji's critical paper on the East India Company's courts and police was interrupted by the Hindu College Principal, Captain Richardson : "He [Richardson] would remind the meeting of the security the natives now enjoyed, in comparison with the conditions of their ancestors under the Mohomedan Government." Dakshinaranjan Mukherji readily agreed with him.²² Another instance is the speech given by the Duke of Cambridge in a reception to Dwarkanath Tagore (1842) where the Duke reminded him of how, out of pure humanitarian motives, the English had rescued the natives from Muslim tyranny.²³

In 1857, a hundred years after Plassey, the very foundations of the British Indian Empire were shaken for a brief while. In a body the Bengali intelligentsia reacted to the Mutiny as the most loyal and grateful subjects of the British rulers, trying to prove that such crass disloyalty would not have occurred to the Hindus had not the Muslims been behind it all. Ishwarchandra Gupta, editor of *Sangbad Prabhakar*, wrote²⁴ :

In the same article, the editor laments that though the infinitely merciful British Government had bestowed great advantages on the Muslims, they had not been thankful enough —

Sangbad Prabhakar was the most prominent forum of a whole generation of literary figures. Its editorial comments on the Mutiny are therefore significant evidence of the

intelligentsia's reaction. It reminds the readers on 20 June 1857 :

Then in a grovelling and disgustingly servile tone it composes this panegyric :

Also in the same issue²⁵ :

The very strange use of the word in this context is an eye-opener.

In this context we find the first instances of patriotic poems, Rangalal Bandyopadhyay's Padmini-Upakhyān (1858). This patriotism, consisting exclusively of Hindu nationalism, was directed not against the present masters but emphatically against the Yavanas. All great figures of the Muslim period were vilified and even Akbar was not spared. Maniruzzaman has made the interesting point that after Madhusudan Dutta (whose works are refreshingly free from this anti-Muslim bias) there were two alternative types of literary ideal before the Bengali poets—one, the broad, secular humanitarianism of Madhusudan, and the other, the narrow Hindu nationalism of Rangalal. Rangalal proved to be the more powerful influence, inspiring the next generation of poets as well as later nationalists.²⁶ His Padmini-Upakhyān has been hopefully described by some as a composition in Aesopian language, a ruse against British censorship. But internal evidence proves quite clearly that however it might inspire the Hindus to return to their ancient valour, the British had nothing to fear from it. After the ringing, unforgettable passage Rangalal deplures the present degeneration of the Hindus. The only ray of hope to be discerned at present is.²⁷

By this time this sort of Anglophilia-cum-Muslimophobia has acquired new social and economic roots. The westernised English-educated Hindu *bhadraloks* were definitely larding

it over the Muslims, whose rule was by now a distant, though irritating, memory. In place of the old aggrieved, mortified tone, we find a new sneer, a contempt for a socially inferior people who had dared to hold a superior position in the past.

In Bankim chandra, we find the consummation and the most brilliant and effective formulation of the concept of Muslim tyranny. This aspect of Bankim chandra is a very complex theme and we can go on quoting endless passages to show its various uses. One very important use motivated his instructions for a new kind of history writing. With great care and emphasis and in vitriolic language, he sets out to prove that the Muslim interlude was something alien to the true course of Indian history. He dismisses the works of Stuart, Marshman and others because²⁸.

The new historians have a sacred duty to prove that

Bankimchandra forgets to mention where, under the present regime, the wealth of Bengal (and that of the whole of India for that matter) was now going ! Following from such premises, British rule appeared not only as a historical inevitability, but as the culmination of the working of a just and benevolent Divine will. In Anandmath he explains all this in rather theological terms :

The book concludes with prophecy²⁹ :

Bankimchandra, of course, formulated his religious and social ideas within an explicitly Hindu framework. But even in Keshabchandra Sen's most militant social reform phase, similar assumptions are seen to be at work : "when India lay sunk in the mire of idolatry and superstition, when Muhammedan oppression and misrule had almost extinguished the last spark of hope in the native Indian

mind the Lord in His mercy sent out the British nation to rescue India³⁰.

Muslim separatism is a much advertised fact, although many of its important causes are not far to find their resentment over their relative backwardness in the early phase of British rule, greater scope and opportunities for the Hindus, the latter's smug assumptions of superiority. This was later fed by the classtension in Bengal between landlords (predominantly Hindu) and peasants (predominantly Muslim) which was skilfully exploited by orthodox Muslims. That Hindu separatism had always been at least equally alive in different forms is evident from the fact that the nineteenth-century intelligentsia spoke in one voice about Muslim rule as good riddance to bud rubbish. The many grievances that provided the basis of this attitude should be more historically and critically investigated. Apart from the much-vaunted western learning for "a microscopic minority," what other tangible benefits could the intelligentsia visualise which would have been impossible without British conquest? Even Rammohun Roy was aware that the Hindus used to have larges in bureaucratic, administrative and economic opportunities now denied to them : "Your Majesty is aware that under their former Muhammadan Rulers, the natives of this country enjoyed every political privilege in common with Mussulmans, being eligible to the highest offices in the state, entrusted with the command of armies and the government of provinces and often chosen as advisers to their prince without disqualification or degrading distinction on account of their religion Under the British rule, the natives of India have entirely lost their political conse-

quence."⁶¹ That he was not exaggerating is borne out by the fact that so many important traders, bankers, landlords and political personages under the Nawabs were Hindus. As for the change of religious intolerance and discrimination, especially under Aurnagzeb, recent research is showing that Aurangzeb's policies were primarily dictated by political, and not religious considerations. Regarding the possibilities of more progressive development along local lines, we have to explore our eighteenth. century heritage more closely before dismissing it as a barren deadweight. Thus, much of the basis of the concept of Muslim tyranny crumbles under a critical scrutiny. A more heightened awareness of Hindu separatist limitations is therefore obviously required in a study of the Bengal Renaissance.

NOTES

1. In contrast, "historical writing before the origin of British power in India seems to have been remarkable secular" Barun De, 'A Preliminary Note on the Writing of the History of Modern India,' *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies* (Cal.), 1963-64, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 40.
2. *Bharatachandra Granthabali*, edited by Bandyopadhyaya and Das (Calcutta 1950), p. 14.
3. Most of these facts are taken from J. S. Grewal, *Muslim rule in India - The Assessments of British Historians* (O. U. P., 1970).

4. "Dow does not seek the germs of Bengal's decline in the disintegration of Mughal power" we may date the commencement of the decline from the day on which Bengal fell under the dominion of foreigners, who were more anxious to improve the present moment to their own emolument than to secure a permanent advantage to the British nation', The political solution he puts forward is that the East India Company should assume full sovereign powers without further delay," Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal* (Paris, 1963), pp. 31-32.
5. Grewal, p. 67.
6. David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (California, 1965), Chapter 2.
7. Grewal, p. 67.
8. Sumit Sarkar, 'Hindu-Muslim Relations in Swadeshi Bengal, 1903-1908,' *Indian Economy and Social History Review* (New Delhi) June 1972, p.p. 176-177. The article also gives the following quotation from the generally pro-nationalist Muslim weekly Soltan (8 June 1906). "We know that the object of our Hindu brethren in celebrating the Shivaji festival is either to wound Musalman feelings nor to vilify the reign of Aurangzeb. But in order to give high praise to Shivaji, one cannot but censor Musalman rule."
9. J. K. Mazumdar (ed.), *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* (Calcutta, 1941). pp. 115-117.
10. OP. cit., p. 210.

11. Op. cit., p. 183.
12. Op. cit., p. 330.
13. A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal 1818-1835* (Leiden, 1965), p. 149.
14. S. D. Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, ed. by Biswas and Ganguly (Calcutta, 1962), Appendix I. p. 449.
15. Ibid., pp. 430-431.
16. Rammohun Roy, "On the Ancient Rights of Females," *English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, ed. by Nag and Burman (Calcutta, 1945), part i, p. 1.
17. Collet, op. cit., p. 445.
18. Heary Derozio, *Poems* (Calcutta, 1972), p. 15.
19. Gautam Chattopadhyay, *Awakening in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1965), pp. 94-95.
20. Op. cit., pp. 350-351.
21. Benoy Ghosh, ed., *Samayikpatre Samaj Chitra*, Vol. 1 (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 160-161.
22. Gautam Chattopadhyay, op. cit., pp. 392, 396.
23. Kishorichand Mitra, *Dwarkanath Tagore* (Bengali edition, ed. by K. K. Dasgupta, Calcutta 1952), p. 180.
24. Benoy Ghosh, op. cit., pp. 235-6.
25. Op. cit., pp. 226-30.
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PART III



BRITISH POLICY AND THE GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE INDIA

SANTIMAY RAY

Communalism as an Indian phenomenon was a product of the British colonial rule and continues to pose a serious challenge to the secular policies and modernisation processes in the country today. The term communalism signifies the overrating of the demands of a particular community at the expense of other sister communities. Overemphasising a separate identity and the refusal to accommodate interests other than its own constitute one of its main features. After the independence and the partition the problem assumed new dimension with the emergence of militant hindu communalist forces in the form of the RSS, the Anand Marg and similar organisations threatening the growth of secular nationalism as propounded by Gandhiji, Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh and the communist and social leaders. As a reaction, the muslim communalist forces represented by organisations like Jamait-e-Islami and spurred by series of riots in different parts of the country are becoming stronger and firmly rooted in the society. Since the present malady can be understood in the perspective of past developments, the present study undertakes to examine the historical roots of the growth of communalist thinking and communal movements in pre-independence India. Historically speaking, conflict between hindus and muslims was never a chronic feature as has been supposed by Dr R. C. Mazumdar.¹

On the contrary, there is enough historical evidence to show that before the British conquest of India hindus and muslims lived in peace and harmony. The study of the Sufi literature brings this out in full measure². Identity of interest between the two communities was so complete that early muslim invaders who came from beyond the Hindukush were resisted jointly by the muslims and the hindus³. The situation continued to be as good even during the nineteenth century. In 1815, the *Hamilton Gazetteer* reported that the two religious communities were living in perfect peace and harmony "with tolerance and indulgence unusual in other countries".

With the expansion and consolidation of British conquest however certain factors emerged which encouraged the forces of communalism in the country. The first important development after the Battle of Plassey (1757) was "the rapid economic impoverishment of the Muslims". The entire administrative system was overhauled by the British within a short time the position of the muslims deteriorated and their distress became much more acute than that of the hindus⁴.

The second development followed logically from the first. "Bereft of their former privileges and facilities the muslims found it difficult to make a satisfactory adjustment with the British rule.⁵ The Fakir rebellion which continued from 1771 to 1800 under the leadership of Majnur Shaw, Musa was the first reaction of the depressed muslim communities. The rebellion was subsequently suppressed⁶. The accumulated discontent again found expression in Faraizi and Wahabi movements which started in 1824 and were led by persons like Moulana Sahria-tullah, Mr Nisarali of the Barasat uprising fame (1829-31) and

Saheed Syed Ahmed of Raibareilly. After the death of these leaders the Wahabis continued their resistance movement against British domination in all possible ways.

Thirdly, the baboos of Calcutta had by virtue of their association with the British as translators and middlemen realised the importance of the English language and western education in a changing social context during the early nineteenth century. They began to take advantage of the western education and idolise Englishmen like Macaulay. On the other hand, the muslims, led by their religious leaders, turned away from everything foreign. Some of them were the followers of Shah Waliwalla of the Delhi School. "Thus not Hindu College (1817) but the Calcutta Madrasa became the main channel through which the exuberant muslim sentiment expressed itself in manifold ways."⁷ The opening of the department of English in the Calcutta madrasa in 1829 did not improve the situation. Another Madrasa was established at Hooghly in 1936 with the donation of Haji Muhammad Mohsin⁸.

The process of uneven development of these two communities was accelerated by certain measures adopted by the government such as the introduction of the local vernacular language along with English to conduct the business of the government. The system of examination for official employment was introduced in 1844. The posts of deputy magistrate and deputy collector were reserved for the English-knowing candidates from 1859⁹. It was decided in 1863 that "half of the posts of munsifs, darogas and pleaders would be reserved for those who had passed the university entrance or higher examinations." All law examinations were held in English from 1864 and the Bachelors of

Law alone were eligible to become munsifs according to a rule laid down in 1866.¹⁰ It was decided in 1864 that "English alone should be the language of examination for the more coveted appointments in the subordinate Civil Service". By this time Persian had been dislodged from its former official position. Side by side, the government's policy regarding the grant of revenue free land to muslim study centres put the Arabic and Persian knowing muslims to great inconvenience¹¹.

The cumulative effect of such an avowed policy of discrimination towards muslims and the patronage of English knowing hindu babcoos made the muslims a born rebel and the hindus a collaborator. In spite of such uneven growth, however, the urge for united action proved to be a stronger compulsion as can be seen from the great uprising of 1857. During the revolt of 1857 both Bahadur Shah and the Mughal flag found common acceptance of hindu leaders like Nana Saheb Tantiya Tope, Kunwar Singh and Rani Laxmi Bai.

The significance of the British policy in the growth of communalism has been underrated both by contemporary Indian historians of the Calcutta school represented by Ramesh Chandra Majumdar as well as by the Cambridge school represented by Anil Seal, Judith Brown, etc.

The full development of communalism can however be traced only from the latter half of the nineteenth century¹². For the British, the revolt of 1857, which some Englishmen described as a national conspiracy¹³ served as an eye-opener for the British rulers who were shaken by the fact that the hindus and muslims could also unite on the basis of a common cause.

Once the East India company's rule was firmly entrenched,

thinking began on the formulation of a policy in regard to the Indian community. Appearing before the Lord's Committee in 1813, Lord Hastings and Sir John Malcolm put forward their objections to the admission of missionaries in India in the following words: "In the present extended state of our Empire our security for preserving a power of so extraordinary a nature as that we have established rests upon the general division of the great communities under the Government and their sub division into various castes and sub-castes. While they continue divided in this manner no insurrection is likely to shake the stability of our power"¹⁴. A glimpse of the government's policy about this time is found in the diary of Farington under the date 21 May 1820. Referring to the same subject Col Brown wrote that "the Hindoos are the aborigines of the country, the Mahomedans are intruders. They have strong prejudices against each other and the British Government avails itself of their hostile feeling, which prevents their coalescing in opposition to it."

"This is in direct contradiction to the quotation we have from *Hamilton's Gazetteer* of 1815. Things could not have changed very much in five years in those days. We have to understand that Col Brown's wish is father to his thought and then when he says the British Government avails itself of their hostile feeling we can easily see that he plainly means that it does its best to inflame into positive hostility, the differences that exist and to create new ones"¹⁵.

The question of reorganisation of the army, was considered in 1821. Writing in the *Asiatic Journal* of May 1821, a British officer named Carnaticus observed that "Divide et Impera should be the motto for our Indian administration, whether political, civil or military". In 1843, Lord Ellenborough, the then

viceroys of India, strongly advocated the policy of conciliating the Hindus and ignoring the Muslims. "I cannot close my eyes", he wrote, "to the belief that this race (Muslim) is fundamentally hostile to us and therefore our true policy is to conciliate the Hindus"¹⁶.

The post mutiny years witnessed a persistent endeavour to implement the policy of divide and rule or in modern terminology—'balance and rule'¹⁷. Changing its favourites, as the unfolding situation demanded, became the basic tenet of British policy since then.

On 21 November 1857, Canning wrote, "I do wish to leave both religions alone and to treat them with indifference in the real sense of the term"¹⁸. The government's attitude to the problem is further reflected in the following letter of Canning which states that all exclusion of Mohammedans, Rajputs or even of Brahmins should be a matter of management rather than of rule and indeed that it will be right to take an opportunity, though not just yet, to show, by an exception here and there, that the rule does not exist. It is desirable that no class should feel that it had henceforward nothing to expect from the government¹⁹.

In 1857 Lt John Coke stated, in course of giving evidence before a commission on the reorganisation of the civil and military offices, that "our endeavour should be to uphold in full force the separation which exists between the different religions and races: not to endeavour to amalgamate them. 'Divide et impera' should be the principle of Indian Government". Lord Elphinstone, governor of Bombay, wrote in a minute dated 14 May 1858, that "Divide et impera was the old Roman motto and it should be ours"²⁰.

After the suppression of the revolt of 1857, the British were particularly severe on the muslims—since they had come to the conclusion that the revolt was led and organised by the muslims. The retaliatory attitude of the British towards the muslims is summed up by R. C. Majumdar who states that in Delhi alone 27,000 muslims were hanged and another 50,000 of them were sent to the Andaman islands to be decimated gradually²¹. The period from 1858 to 1885 marked the rise of nationalist movement, which was greatly influenced by the idea of hindu revivalism with Maxmuller as the arch priest followed by Sri Rajnarayan Bose. The influence of Dayananda Saraswati lent to it a militant hindu nationalist character.

In the background of these developments the muslims put up a heroic fight along with the Indigo revolters to the British as can be seen from the terrorist activities of the Wahabis. But ultimately they gave way to modernist western educational movement, led by Sir Syed Ahmed and popularly known as Aligarh movement. The Aligarh movement was preceded by Sri Abdul Latif's Muslim Literary movement in Calcutta. Justice Amir Ali supplemented the literary movement by rediscovering Islam's own identity in his famous *Rise of Islam*²².

Displaying considerable farsightedness, both Macaulay (1833) and Sri Charles Frevelyan (1864) pleaded for the introduction of liberal western education among the hindus in order to make them more English than the Englishmen themselves. Their object was to provide a social case to the colonial regime, so that the latter could be defended and protected in times of social turmoil.

But social developments did not wholly conform to the British scheme of things. The effects of the revolt of 1857, the

rise of an ambitious educated middle-class among the hindus and their gradual disillusionment with the British led inevitably to the growth of an agitational politics which witnessed the birth of the Indian National Congress although its dominant hindu character discouraged a part of the muslim leaders who continued to support the pro-British modernist school led by Sri Syed. On its part the British government was keenly watching the developments and, it made a concerted attempt to thoroughly implement their policy of divide and rule both in the realm of politics and in the fields of culture and education. In this context, it may be useful to know what prompted the British ex-servicemen to take so much interest in social, anthropological and historical research from 1865 onwards and also what political interest lay behind the preparation of the compendious history of muslim rule in India by Elliot and Dawson Todd, Briggs and V. A. Smith James Mill has already given a lead in this direction by periodising Indian history on the basis of religion.

The growth of biased historical literature since 1865 had a tremendous effect on the hindu intelligentsia of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even our greatest poet Rabindranath found himself exposed to the communally biased history of India. It was only after the Khilafat and non co-operation movements that he could extricate himself from this deadly poison. It did not, however, influence some other great poets of the same age like Nazrul Islam or Subramanyam Bharati. Similarly, our pioneer historian Sri Jadunath became an willing victim of this deadly poison and transmitted it to others with tragic consequences. From 1865 onwards the British government modified its earlier policy of total hostility

to the muslim community and, began to show political favour to the upper class muslims who supported the work done by W. W. Hunter to highlight the genuine grievances of the Indian muslims especially in the field of education and higher employment²³.

Similarly, Theodore Beck, an ex-civilian in the N. W. Province, together with Sir Syed Ahmed, took great interest in the establishment of Anglo-oriental College at Aligarh in 1875. Beck had a hand in the formation of Sir Syed's anti-Congress stand as compared to the stand taken by Badrudnin Tayabji and Sibli Nomanl. The endeavours of Theodore Beck to wean away Sir Syed from the platform of Indian National Congress and his eventual success in doing so gave great encouragement to the growth of communal politics in India. It deprived the national movement, in its formative stage, of the mature advice and active participation of a person of Sir Syed's intellectual calibre and secular thinking. Hindu National leaders also, not having the advantage of the healthy influence which the co-operation of Muslim co-workers, would have exercised on them, often drifted, under the belief that they were helping the national cause, into religious and communal activities which created further suspicions in the minds of the Muslim community²⁴.

The growth of Ganapati Festival, Sivaji Urshab in Maharashtra, Bhabani Mandir Club movement and the reading of the *Gita* in Congress sessions, practice of taking oath before the goddess Kali—all this helped the growth of a militant communal consciousness among the hindu participants in the Indian struggle for freedom during these years. To a great extent, the development discouragd the participation of muslims in

the freedom movement. The British line of thinking around this time can be best understood from the following observation by John Strachey who wrote that "the better class of Mohamedans are a source of strength to us and not of weakness and a continuously wise policy might I believe, make them strong and important supporters of our power. They constitute a small but energetic minority of the population, whose political interests are identical with ours and who, under no conceivable circumstances, would prefer hindu domination to our own"²⁵.

Lord Curzon, who was primarily responsible for the partition of Bengal in 1905, evidently shared the thinking of Strachey in full measure. He made no secret of his intention when he boasted of having given to the muslims, for the first time, a sense of nationality, little realising the bitter consequences of his action. A logical outcome of these tendencies was the birth of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha in 1906-07. This was followed by the introduction of separate electorate in the Morley-Minto Reform which further increased the gap between the two communities and divided the national movement into two different political streams, causing irreparable damage to the movement itself. A change was however noticeable during the first world war when Indian revolutionaries including members of the Islamic Brotherhood of Deobands (a remnant of Wahabis), the Gaddar, the Anushilan, the Jugantar, came out of their communal orbit and made a united bid for an uprising. But the attempt did not succeed. The Congress and the League also came closer in 1916 and held their common session in Lucknow.

The post-war discontent arising out of the policy of bluff and bully adopted by the British government, gave another

chance to Gandhiji and the nationalist forces to draw the muslim community closer to the mainstream of national movement. That was the high watermark of Indian national movement which was repeated only on the 29 July, 1946.

But subsequent failure of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat movement in 1922 and the capture of congress organisation by hindu communal forces led to the failure of Unity Conference in 1929²⁷. With this, the hindu and muslim communal forces once again began to dominate the political scene and also divide the political thinking and activity along separatist lines—a development which continues to strike mistrust and disharmony in contemporary Indian social life.

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HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Academecian Bobojan Gafurov

The significance of history is rightly judged not by the number of years that have elapsed but by the character and magnitude of achievements that is, in the final analysis, by the degree of mass involvement in creative activity, on which the pace of social progress ultimately depends.

The whole of our epoch which began with the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution' particularly the contemporary period is characterised by a mighty acceleration in the pace of history, stipulated by the immeasurably increased people's participation in historical movements.

The masses have always played a decisive role in history. But never has their role been as great as now, which is confirmed by present-day development in all countries. And does not India owe its remarkable success, achieved in the 25 years of independence, primarily to the selfless efforts of the great India people, to the working class? It was not without reason that Jawaharlal Nehru called the people 'the main character of history'.

All the factors which contribute to the further strengthening of the people's forces acquired such great importance precisely because the role of the masses in the progress of mankind has increased beyond measure. The unity of the masses, rallied together to carry out the tasks of transformation of the society in their own interests, constitutes one of these factors.



We know well how grand have been the successes achieved in the present epoch by the progressive forces as a result of historically established unity of the three currents of the world revolutionary process : the world socialist system, the international working class and communist movement, and the national-liberation movement.

It is no secret that as a result of the comprehensive support extended by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist movement, the system of colonialism has collapsed and 70 new sovereign states have appeared on the political map of the world.

The peoples of Asia and Africa, those who have liberated themselves from the yoke of imperialism and those who are still fighting against colonial oppression and slavery, know from their own experience the importance of unity in the anti-imperialist struggle. This is evidenced by the growth in the movement of Afro-Asian solidarity which is playing an important positive role in the world today. The documents of the Cairo Conference of non-aligned countries laid special stress on the need for unity in the anti-imperialist struggle.

We have just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The USSR, created on the initiative and under the guidance of the great Lenin, is a vivid implementation of his ideas on genuine friendship, mutual help and mutual understanding between peoples. An unprecedented historic community of people, the Soviet people, who through joint efforts are building communist society, has emerged in the USSR. The Central Committee of the CPSU in its "Resolution on Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of USSR" said : The Soviet

Union embodies relations of unity and friendship between free nations previously unheard of in history. This friendship is one of the greatest gains of socialism, the mighty motive power of Soviet society, and an inexhaustible fount of creative endeavour by the working people of all nationalities in the USSR for the noblest cause that exists—construction of communism.*

The entire centuries-old history of the Indian people confirms the simple but profound truth that progress can be achieved only when the democratic forces of a nation are united; only under this condition is it possible to bring about far-reaching social transformations. Conversely, it has to be noted that if reactionary forces manage to split the democratic unity of the masses in their selfish interests to pit sections of the people against one another, it would inevitably lead to the most harmful consequences.

For many years I have been studying the history and the culture of the Indian people, who created one of the great civilisations, who underwent innumerable sufferings under the colonial yoke, and who are now trying to build a new life after independence. I have often thought about the unity and the diversity of this great country, about the reason for its achievements and the difficulties it is facing. This has inevitably drawn me to the Hindu-Muslim problem. I think that this problem is only a part of a much wider problem about the unity of the people, and I am sure that it can be solved only through achieving this unity in the interests of progress.

How did this problem emerge in India?

History shows that for centuries Hindus and Muslims lived together but the Hindu-Muslim problem did not exist as one of the urgent political questions. The wars which broke out in

India were the result of economic and political reasons and almost never religious. For decades did Hindus and Muslims live in peace and concord, disagreements between them occurring quite rarely. However, the situation radically changed when the country was invaded by foreign conquerors. Colonialists feared like death the unity of the Indian people. They did their worst to break this unity, thus weakening the people. They felt they could achieve their aims by inciting animosities between Hindus and Muslims, setting the communities against each other. There are on record a number of frank utterances made by British officers in India which testify to this. In the middle of the last century one such officer said : "Our endeavour should be to uphold in full force the (for us fortunate) separation which exists between the different religions and races, not to endeavour to amalgamate them. *Divide et impera* should be the principle of Indian government." (Quoted in R. Palme Dutt's *India Today* Bombay, 1947, p. 377). As years went by, the colonialists tried to conceal the implications of their policy, but considerably stepped up their efforts to implement this principle. Thus, it is clear that the problem of Hindu-Muslim differences came up only with the arrival of the colonialists in India. It certainly did not exist earlier.

And how could it be otherwise Hindus ? and Muslims in India are part of one and the same people Both are Indians—as a rule, both in the main are toilers, simple people of their native country. This is what that penetrating student of Indian history, Jawaharlal Nehru, has written : "Partly because the great majority of Muslims in India were converts from Hinduism, partly because of long contact, Hindus and Muslims in India have developed numerous common traits, habits, ways

of living and artistic tastes, especially in northern India—in music, painting, architecture, food and clothes and common traditions. They lived together peacefully as one people, joined each other's festivals and celebrations, spoke the same language, lived in more or less the same way, and faced identical economic problems." (*The Discovery of India* Calcutta, 1946, p. 313).

It seems to me that when you get acquainted with the life of Muslims and Hindus in India the similarities between them are much more evident than differences. Don't mothers of both Hindu and Muslim infants behave the same way when they take it out, on the sixth day after its birth, to show it the stars ? Aren't both Hindu and Muslim bridegrooms showered with dry fruits as they cross the threshold ? Aren't similar songs sung at both Hindu and Muslim marriages ? And what about the tradition of painting the palms with intricate conventional Indian patterns ? And don't Hindus wear *sherwani* and *pyjama*, and Muslims *dhoti* and *sari* ? And don't we find common food dishes—*chapati*, *poori*, *chawal*, *mirch*, sweets—on the tables of both Hindus and Muslims ?

Even the customs connected with the performance of religious rites by Hindus and Muslims, where one could hardly expect common features, do have something in common. Is it not true that there are saints and *sufis* who are equally worshipped by Hindus and Muslims. Don't Hindus make new clothes for the *Id* and don't Muslims kindle the lights of *Diwali* ? It is not only Hindus who make their way to the Ganges for ablutions, Muslims do the same, and the *Mir ghat* peacefully prolonged. But one thing is clear—for many centuries of life together, a nation has been formed, the nation of Indians,



and differences in religion do not change this fact and cannot change the established order of things

I dwell on the point only because even now there are some people who want to disturb the unity of the people, to incite fratricidal hatred, setting Muslims against Hindus and Hindus against Muslims. They try to make the credulous believe that the Indian Muslims are not Indians at all, that they are a foreign element on the Indian soil, something absolutely alien to the history and culture of the country. Only those blinded by prejudice can accept such fallacious stories.

It is common knowledge that Muslims like other Indian have greatly contributed to the development of the Indian society. Among Indian Muslims we come across names of outstanding poets, writers, thinkers, scientists, artists, political figures. Mirza Ghalib and Muhammed Iqbal, Abul Kalam Azad and Zakir Hussain and a large number of other names are equally dear to the hearts of all Indians. They did not work and live only for the good of their religious community, but for the welfare of the motherland as a whole.

And everybody who studies and ponders over the history of India understands perfectly well that the cooperation of Hindus and Muslims has always been helpful for the public weal. Everywhere such unity took place conditions were created for the people to climb another step higher in historical progress. *Sufism* emerged in India—the country where different peoples, languages and religions coexisted peacefully. The bulk of the people led their lives far from the capitals, in small towns and villages. It was through *sufism* that wide sections of the Indian population accepted Islam. There are many Muslims in Sind, Western Punjab, Kashmir whose ancestors were Hindus. In

The *sufis* enjoyed special popularity with the simple people. They studied religious and philosophical systems of Hindus, the epics and the folk-lore of the country ; spoke local languages—Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Sindhi and others ; translated into Indian languages the works of Arabic and Persian literature. Hindism, the *Vedanta* had a great impact on *sufism*. Neo-Platonic and *Vedantic* ideas are reflected in the philosophical system *Vahdatul-Vodzhud* created by Mohuddin-Ibn-al Arabi in the book *Phosusulhikam* (12th-13th centuries). Buddhism also influenced *sufism*. Many *sufis* led the life of Buddhist hermits, rejecting the rituals ordered by Islam. The influence of Hindism is especially noticeable on the *sufi* orders of *chishties*. They came into close contact with *yogis* and *sadhus*, borrowed from them the practice of music and singing during prayers. They wear clothes similar to those the *sadhus* wear, they are not supposed to eat beef and show disrespect to Hindu gods. When the spiritual pastor *chishtie* is proclaimed, he is crowned with the turban of Shankarcharya, and Muslims and Hindus at the time go on a pilgrimage to holy places. The teaching of the *chishtie*, with negation of wealth, preaching of philanthropy, self-abnegation, etc., is similar to Hindusim. Early *sufism* had a lot of reformatory features in it, and was somewhat like the *bhakti* movement. In its time *sufism* was a progressive character as, like the *bhakti* cult, it reflected the sentiments and aspirations of the ordinary people, their desire for unity for a better life.

Let us take another example, the period of history which is often called the age of Akbar. Emperor Akbar managed to consolidate his power to a great extent owing to his policy of tolerance and concessions to Hindus. He tried to develop

mutual understanding and peace among Hindus and Muslims, he did not discriminate against any creed and none were persecuted for performing their religious rites. The religious policy of Akbar affected not only the upper layers of the population but wide masses as well ; the abolition of taxes which had been earlier imposed on Hindus made the lot of the people easier. The policy of tolerance greatly contributed to the expansion of the state's territory which included a vast area inhabited by numerous peoples who spoke different languages and belonged to different castes and professed different religions. Moreover, the various parts of the state were much better linked politically, economically, and culturally than formerly. The harmony between Hindus and Muslims made the period of Akbar a flourishing period of medieval India. The process of different cultural traditions becoming closer and merging made a rapid headway. The Hindu-muslim cultural synthesis, which found expression in literature, architecture, sculpture, music, painting, dancing as well as in everyday life, customs, food, clothes, etc., became a characteristic feature of the development of culture of this period. The architectural structures of Akbar's time combined Hindu ornamentation with Muslim severity and symmetry and balance. The famous traditional school of Indian painting enriched by the influence of Persian miniatures was revived. Such remarkable artists as Abu-Us Samad, Das Vanath and Basavan lived and did their creative work in the palace of Akbar. Court singer and musician Tansen was a great master of the musical art of that time. Characteristically, Akbar himself practised customs and rituals of different religions. In the morning he prayed to the sun and fire always burned in his palace as if he were Zoroastrian ; he did not eat anything after

sunset like a Jain ; he listened to Bible readings like a Christian; twice a day he did *asanas* like a Hindu; he believed like the *sufis* that there is only one truth and different religions are only ways to find it. He invited to his house Muslims, Jains, Christians and Brahmins as teachers for his sons

And, finally, speaking of the examples of the unity between Hindus and Muslims, one must recall the period of the struggle waged by the Indian people for political independence and sovereignty, for freedom of their land. The unity of the ordinary people of India—Hindus and Muslims—manifested its strength during the course of the Great Popular Uprising of 1857-1859. This unity became an important factor in the struggle against foreign invaders. It contributed to the realisation of the community of interests of Hindus and Muslims in the course of the first great combat against the colonialists. The advanced representatives of the people understood well that only the unity of Hindus and Muslims could lead to success in the struggle against foreign oppressors. There is considerable evidence pointing to this. When the fighters set up in Delhi new governmental bodies they addressed this appeal to the people : "It is necessary that all the people, Hindus and Muslims, got united in this struggle." The activities of Fazl Haq—a great writer and poet and an ideologist of the people's movement of 1857-1859—clearly testified to the ever-growing tendency in the anti-colonial struggle for Hindu-Muslim unity. He rose above religious narrow-mindedness, calling for the unity of Hindus and Muslims. The ideas of Hindu-Muslim unity, raised high during the Great Popular Uprising, became increasingly widespread as the Indian national-liberation movement gathered momentum.

These ideas were again in the ascendent during the activation of the anti-colonial struggle in 1918-1922, when the emerged. The Khilafat movement began against the desire of England to break up the Ottoman empire, in connection with which Indian Muslims raised the slogan of mass anti-imperialist struggle in defence of the prestige of the Turkish Caliph as the spiritual leader of all the Muslims. This movement received the active support of the Indian National Congress. Prominent public figures of the Indian national-liberation movement were present at the All-India Khalifat Conference, which took place in Amritsar in 1919. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, attaching utmost importance to this movement, tried to make the most of it for rallying Hindus and Muslims. The unity of the people was later repeatedly manifested in the cause of anti-colonial resistance till the victory of the liberation movement. It is suffice to remember in this connection the revolt of sailors in Bombay in 1946, which raised the slogan : "Hindus and Muslims, Unite !" It is characteristic that this slogan was put forward along with "Down With British Imperialism !"

It is obvious that in the people's minds the thought about the liberation of the country from the foreign yoke was inseparably connected with the thought about the necessity of unity between Hindus and Muslims.

Great leaders of India always considered the rallying of Hindus and Muslims as a necessary and urgent condition of progress. It is not accidental that all the outstanding figures of Indian history did their utmost to strengthen this unity. And it is quite natural that all such leaders, each in his own way, become a spokesman of the tendencies of progressive

development ; they were all closely connected with the people of their country, were quite aware of their dreams, hopes and aspirations.

Guru Nanak was one of those outstanding leaders of the Indian people who enriched the treasury of their spiritual life. He himself belonged to the lower orders of the society, was akin to the common people. His teaching and work reflected the people's discontent with cruel feudal oppression the protest against class and caste privileges, religious difference and intolerance. He concerned himself with the realities of life, sympathised with the pitiful fate of the simple man, and condemned the idle and dissipated life of the rich. He called for active life for the benefit of the people, which alone elevated a man. Nanak spoke about equality though he meant only equality of people in the face of God. He persistently called for the unity of the followers of different religions, laying special emphasis on the necessity of unity between Hindus and Muslims.

Nanak was one of those who initiated free thinking among Indians. In the gloomy medieval times he courageously came out against outmoded concepts and paved the way for the spiritual liberation of the people. His teachings evoked a warm response in the hearts of the people. The ideas of Guru Nanak have become part and parcel of the humanistic and democratic thought of India.

Kabir was another representative of the powerful reform movement of *bhakti* which voiced the discontent of the people with caste and social aggression and Hindu-Muslim discord. He also professed the equality of men belonging to different castes, the equality of Hindus and Muslims. Kabir declared : "I am

the son of Ram and Allah at the same time." He exposed the sanctimonious clergy, ridiculing their hypocrisy, dishonesty, mercenary interests. Kabir professed, in the spirit characteristic of all democratically and humanistically-minded thinkers of his time, that the truth of life is not to be found in temples or mosques, not in religious books but within man himself, in his active involvement in earthly affairs, in his high spiritual qualities. With his preachings and songs Kabir won the love and admiration of his people and came to be hated by reactionaries and obscurantists.

I could name a large number of personalities who contributed to the strengthening of unity between Hindus and Muslims. But it is impossible to cite here all of them. One cannot, however, keep silent about the activity of Mahatma Gandhi. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi made an important contribution to the struggle for national liberation and progress of his country. In the dark days of colonial oppression he did a great deal to awaken the national consciousness of Indians for the sake of freedom ; he instilled confidence in them, inspired them to courage, selflessness, heroism and fearlessness in the struggle for freedom ; he tried to make them aware of the necessity of realising their aims and fighting for them. His whole life was devoted to tireless struggle for the unity of the liberation forces of India, to the removal of everything which interfered with the anti-colonial resistance of the Indian people. That is why his fight against caste prejudices, against Hindu-Muslim discord, against religious differences had such a rich humanistic content. Mahatma Gandhi understood perfectly well that the people of India have common interests in the struggle for freedom and progress of their motherland and that

they cannot realise their aspirations under conditions of religious discord. It is due to this reason that Mahatma Gandhi looked forward to uniting the Indian people. He said : "Be they Hindus or Muslims—they are sons of India. Every body who was born in this country and considers it his mother-land, be he a Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Chiistian, Jain or Sikh—all of them are its equal children, which means that they all are brothers connected with one another by ties closer than those of blood." These humanistic ideas of Gandhi are relevant even today.

The Republic of India is a secular, democratic state. The Constitution of the country guarantees freedom of religion, prohibits interference in the internal affairs of any religious community, any discrimination on the basis of religion. It is common knowledge that Jawaharlal Nehru indignantly castigated religious animosities. In the course of the struggle for independence he wrote : " the leaders of the community were the allies of the most reactionary elements in India as well as in England .. In action they came out against political and even more against social progress. None of their demands had anything to do with the interests of masses. Their demands were aimed at improving the position of the small section of upper classes." (Retranslated from Russian *An Autobiography*, Moscow edition, 1955, p. 482) Nehru was categorically opposed to utilising religious feelings for the achievement of mercenary political interests.

We know that the efforts of the champions of Hindu-Muslim unity were not wasted, though there are still forces in the country interested in sowing discord between Hindus and Muslims. The people have realised from their own experience

whose interests the later serve and regard them with disgust.

The Indian people look forward to the future, and what prospect can the forces of obscurantism and religious-chauvinism hold out for them ? These forces would like to reverse the course of history. They would like to make the Indian people look into the past instead of the future. And with this aim they turn not to those great values of the past which were created by the people in the course of thousands of years of their history and which constitute the foundation of the people's present and future but to the things which have become obsolete which used to be cast into the dust-bin of history. However, the people have always adopted a wise attitude towards the past. Here, I would like to quote once again Jawaharlal Nehru :

"India must break with much of the past and not allow it to dominate the present .But that does not mean a break with, or forgetting of the vital and life-giving in that past. We can never forget the ideals that have moved our race, the dreams of the Indian people through the ages. We will never forget them or cease to take pride in that noble heritage of ours." (*The Discovery of India*, Calcutta, 1946, p. 620).


These words contain the people's wisdom.

The experience of Indian history shows that the discord between Hindus and Muslims is a legacy of the past which can be easily given up by the Indian people. The unity of the peoples, including the unity of Muslims and Hindus, is a priceless heritage of the past which will never be forgotten as it has always served the cause of progress and has borne beautiful fruits.

Today, a complex situation has developed in the Hindustan

subcontinent. An analysis of this situation show once again that the calculation of the reactionary forces, based as they largely were on stirring up religious differences, proved wrong. The reactionaries, who tried to strike a blow at the democracy and independence of the people under the garb of demagogic speeches about the protection of their religion, suffered a shattering defeat. And neither Hindus nor Muslims, no matter the country to which they belong, as long as they are devoted to the interests of peace and social justice, ever regret it.

All of us sincerely greet the emergence of the sovereign People's Republic of Bong'ladesh—a secular, peaceful and democratic state. Friendly relations have been established between our country and the People's Republic of Bangladesh. We highly appreciate the efforts made by the Government of the Republic of India and personally by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi aimed at maintaining lasting and durable peace in the Hindustan subcontinent. All this raises hopes and brings great satisfaction. It confirms once again that peace and social progress can be achieved under conditions of unity of the democratic forces in every country and all over the world.





INDIRA GANDHI, OUTSTANDING LEADER OF CONTEMPORARY INDIA Academecian Bobojan Gafurov

Only seven years have passed since Indira Gandhi became head of the government of India. Yet, think of the eventful and historically-important of this comparatively short period for the country! It has certainly become an important milestone, the beginning of a new stage in the life of contemporary India, a stage which is already inseparably connected with Mrs. Gandhi's name.

The Indian liberation movement had brought to the fore progressive national leaders, who were indeed worthy of their great people, their deep historical traditions, of the cause of freedom and regeneration. Mrs. Gandhi is their heir and successor.

On 19 November 1930, on her 13th birthday, she received an unusual present, a letter sent to her from the Naini Jail, in which her father was confined. Congratulating his daughter on her birthday, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to her that as a present he had decided to tell her in a series of letters the entire history of mankind. In the first letter he wrote, "The year you were born in—1917—was one of memorable years of history, when a great leader with a heart full of love and sympathy for the poor and suffering, made his people write a noble and never-to-be-forgotten chapter of history. In the very month

in] which you were born, Lenin started the great revolution which has charged the face of Russia...You are fortunate, I have said, in being a witness to this great struggle for freedom that is going on in our country...May you grow up into a brave soldier in India's service !"

During Indira Gandhi's childhood and early youth, she was in constant contact with Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. She studied in the famous Shantiniketan and was a favourite pupil of the great Tagore. In the '30s, when the menace of fascism hung as a dark cloud over the world, when the Hitlerites were preparing to invade Austria, and the Spanish people, actively supported by all progressive mankind, were heroically fighting for liberty and independence, Indira Gandhi (then a student at Oxford) was in the very midst of the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist struggle. She was a member of the committee to help Spain, took an active part in all the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist steps organised by the India League. Already at that time she had fully assimilated one of the most important of Nehru's teachings. He had said many times that only an active anti fascist can be a real fighter for India's independence. When World War II was raging in all its fury and the waves of the national-liberation struggle began mounting higher and higher in India she decided to interrupt her studies and return to her country. When her steamship made a halt in the South African port of Durban. Indira Gandhi (then 22 years old) delivered a political speech in which she sharply condemned racism. She openly expressed her credo for the whole world to hear, and thus challenged the forces of reaction, colonialism and racism.

In August 1942, she attended the historic session of the All-India Congress Committee which adopted an important resolution calling on the British colonialists to quit India. The British imperialists arrested the most prominent functionaries of the country's national-liberation movement. In September 1942, Indira Gandhi was also put behind bars. A number of archive documents published in 1971 show that already at that time the British colonial authorities were very much concerned about the activities of Indira Gandhi, who in the spring of 1943 had refused to leave jail under the condition that she should refrain from active political work. She was in the very pitch of the struggle against British colonialism. On the historic 15 August 1947, when Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the flag of independent India over the Red Fort in Delhi, Indira Gandhi was standing by his side. In those days so full of joy and at the same time very difficult for young India, she was in the very midst of the political struggle. Living and working with Jawaharlal Nehru, she managed to acquire practical experience of international relations and diplomacy and to study the problems of India's domestic and foreign policies. In June 1953, she visited the Soviet Union for the first time. Mr. K.P.S. Menon, the then Indian Ambassador in Moscow, stresses in his memoirs that Indira Gandhi's arrival in Moscow in 1953 played no mean part in strengthening and extending Soviet-Indian relations. It is quite gratifying for us Soviet scholars to realise that Mrs. Gandhi began her work in the field of international relations by actually helping to strengthen Soviet-Indian friendship.

An important place in Mrs. Gandhi's political activities belongs to the year 1955. That year she was elected member of the Working Committee of the congress—the supreme body

of the party. The same year, she, together with other prominent political and public figures of India, went to Indonesia to participate in the historic Bandung Conference, at which she vigorously supported the idea of Afro-Asian solidarity, the idea of unity of the countries of Asia and Africa in the struggle for independence and peace.

Soon after Bandung, Mrs. Gandhi, then a full-fledged member of the Congress Working Committee, came to the Soviet Union with Nehru. The speeches, documents and materials of that period indicate that during that historic visit she made a significant contribution in further consolidating the friendship between our two great countries.

With the passage of years, Mrs. Gandhi's party and public activities earned general acclaim. In February 1959, she was unanimously elected President of the Indian national Congress. Her election to that very important party post, which had been held for a number of years by her grandfather and father, was the logical result of all her activities.

On 27 May 1964, India and its numerous friends the world over were plunged in deep grief: Jawaharlal Nehru, the founder and first Prime Minister of the Republic of India, had died. Lal Bahadur Shastri was chosen as the next Prime Minister. Mrs. Gandhi became Minister of Information and Broadcasting in his cabinet. In this her first government office she took energetic steps for the cultural development of her country.

In November 1964, Mrs. Gandhi was deputed by the Government of India to visit Moscow, this time for talks to further develop Soviet-Indian economic and political relations. She discharged her task with success.

In January 1966, after the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri,

Mrs. Gandhi was elected Prime Minister of India. At the same time, both the Congress and the Parliament reaffirmed adherence to Nehru's principles, came out for the unity of the democratic forces, for continuance of the policy of non-alignment, for Soviet-Indian friendship.

Mrs. Gandhi's life and political activities are, naturally, well known. And I have confined myself to only some of the events which give one a particularly vivid image of this remarkable personality. In reviewing these events, I wanted to emphasise that since early childhood Indira Gandhi has been in an atmosphere of the battle of ideas, the midst of political ferments. She was surrounded by people of strong will and outstanding talent, for whom the concepts of "motherland", "duty", "justice", "struggle", and "liberty" constituted the essence of life, something for which they fought, suffered and died. They were people for whom India's griefs were their own griefs, India's defeats—their own defeats, India's victories—their own victories. In such a truly favourable atmosphere, an atmosphere of upsurge of the liberation movement, Mrs. Gandhi's character and ideals were formed. From it she drew her inspiration for her activities. I would also like to stress that she continues the glorious tradition of the Indian national-liberation movement, and strives to carry these traditions forward, adopting them to the new situation which has developed in contemporary India.

The Soviet people rejoice at every achievement of friendly India scored in its efforts for national regeneration and social progress. An important achievement in this respect is represented by the positive changes that have been effected in India in the last few years under the courageous and skilful guidance of

Mrs. Gandhi. By the middle of the '60s, when she became Prime Minister, new requirements for India's development became particularly acute. They were the result of the country's achievements since independence as well as of the contradictions in its social life. Thanks to Jawaharlal Nehru's progressive courage, India had strengthened its state sovereignty and achieved successes in economic, social and cultural development. Important economic foundations had been laid, and socio-political prerequisites had been created for further all-round progress. Under conditions of national independence and political democracy, gained as a result of the victory of the board-based national-liberation movement, the vast masses of people began awakening to life, and their political consciousness increased immeasurably. This was a magnificent result of India's independent national development, and a potent factor for its further progress.

The legitimate and growing economic and social demands of the masses made it quite clear that it was imperative to step up the rates of economic growth, prevent any further sharpening of socio-economic inequalities, and introduce further social reforms. It is common knowledge that in an attempt to stop such a course from being adopted various reactionary and conservative forces, supported by foreign neo-colonialist circles, tried to join efforts and launch an offensive to establish a political regime suited to them enabling them to preserve their privileges. Everyone acquainted with India knows that in the acute and tense political struggle which developed in the second half of the '60s (a struggle which determined India's destiny for many years to come and which, naturally, had a very great international importance), Mrs. Gandhi played a truly historic part. Her pro-

er
 gressive outlook, personal courage, and political skill made it
 an possible to mobilise the healthy forces of the nation, to streng-
 then the progressive principles and trends of development of
 independent India, and thereby open the way for further pro-
 gress. We are firmly convinced that the Indian people will
 be continue to find positive solutions for the complex problems
 confronting the country. And indeed, as Mrs. Gandhi says,
 "there is something in this country which enables its people,
 for all their illiteracy and backwardness to rise to the occasion
 of when face to face with great challenges". These words, though
 b rather concise, nevertheless carry volumes of meaning. To my
 mind, they are an excellent illustration of the marriage of sober
 understanding of the realities with noble patriotism and faith in
 the creative forces of the people—features which characterise
 of Mrs. Gandhi's activities. Mrs. Gandhi achievements in the
 office of Prime Minister are apparently explained largely by her
 having inherited the progressive democratic outlook and the
 political experience accumulated in the course of the Indian
 liberation movement. This obviously is also the source of her
 inherent sense of change, of her political dynamism. Actually
 not every Prime Minister can utter words like those she spoke
 from the UN rostrum: "Rebels and non-conformists are often
 the Indian liberation movement and the world events, as per-
 ceived by the leading participants in this movement, helped
 Indira Gandhi to understand, when still a very young girl, the
 correct trend of social transformation."

Since then India has covered a long and difficult historical
 road, as it has ascended the steps of progress, perhaps not as
 fast as its vanguard forces would have liked, but invariably with
 great firmness. Whereas in his days Jawaharlal Nehru went

farther than Mahatma Gandhi, developing and deepening the progressive trend of the Indian liberation movement at a new historical stage, this time his daughter has not only continued the cause of her famous father, but has also legitimately carried forward his cause, his approach, in keeping with the bidding of our times and the present-day aspirations of India's multi-million population.

Nehru, insistently affirmed and implemented, as the first Prime Minister of the Republic of India, the programme (developed in the years of struggle for freedom) for an upsurge of the national economy on the basis of the predominant position of the public sector, regarding this as the goal of socialism. "Progress was possible only through socialist methods though the goal was long and arduous, the capitalist system, aggravating inequality, must give way to a socialist system, rapidly", says Mrs. Gandhi. In Nehru's times, the foundations for industrialisation were laid, mainly through the construction by the state of industrial enterprises, primarily, of heavy industry. This led to the creation of an impressive public sector, which has concentrated in it about half the total investment in organised industry, and which has a commanding position in a number of its key branches, serving, at the present stage, as an important factor for the country's further progressive socio-economic development. With a new, more favourable correlation of the socio-political forces, in the establishment of which Mrs. Gandhi has played an outstanding part, her government has been and still is carrying out measures for further development of the public sector, measures which had been contemplated by Jawaharlal Nehru, but which could not be implemented in his life-time. They included the nationalisation of large banks, and a number

of other steps to strengthen the positions of the public sector and spearheaded against the monopolies. They also represent the early steps towards the setting up of state enterprises in light industry also. They further include the important 25th amendment to the Constitution, facilitating further socio-economic transformations. Mrs. Gandhi has pointed out in this connection : "The public sector has gained considerable ground and would be built up to a position of commanding influence in the economy."

The Indian economy still remains 'mixed'. Yet, it should be remembered that Jawaharlal Nehru described mixed economy, as far back as 1948, as a "temporary phenomenon Mrs. Gandhi has stated that along with the advantage of higher production and employment resulting from the activities of private enterprises including those of the big firms, "mixed economy has many faults and certainly it does not mean that a small number of business houses should take advantage of the situation".

At the same time, Mrs. Gandhi has particularly stressed that economic growth should be accompanied by social justice which is of decisive importance. "The overriding inspiration must be a burning sense of social justice", she has said. While increased production is of the utmost importance, it is equally important not to have a concentration of wealth and economic power. The benefits of development should accrue in an increasing measure to the common man and wider sections of society, so that the forces of production can be fully unleashed". In India, one can often hear people say about the Prime Minister : "This woman means business".

The preparations being made by Mrs. Gandhi's government

for new agrarian reforms are also quite important. It is common knowledge that the agrarian reforms of the '50s abolished only certain feudal rights of the higher echelons of feudal lords, who continued to retain their large landed estates. It is generally acknowledged that the former legislation on the maximum size ("ceiling") of land-holdings was ineffective. Speaking of the aggravation of the contradictions between the rich and the poor in the Indian countryside, Mrs. Gandhi has stressed the need for an effective transformation of land relations. "The cracks which have appeared in the agrarian structure cannot be papered over", she observed. The government has approved the recommendations of the commission on agrarian reforms (1971) on fixing a new ceiling for land-holdings. A consistent implementation of these recommendation would mean an important positive change in the life of the Indian countryside. The fact is that, virtually for the first time after independence, and perhaps for the first time in Indian history,, an attempt is being made for a substantial redistribution of the land in favour of the peasantry : taking away part of the land from the major landlords with the land so acquired being turned over to landless peasants and agricultural labourers.

Mahatma Gandhi, in his time and subsequently Jawaharlal Nehru stressed the need for developing cooperation in the countryside, regarding this as a way to economic and social progress in agriculture. Similarly, Mrs Gandhi pointed out as early as 1967 that the cooperatives bridge the gap between help big owners rather than small ones, which is contrary to the very aims of the cooperative movement, and must be prevented. In October 1972, in her speech in Gandhinagar, Mrs. Gandhi had stressed the need for implementation of revolu-

tionary socio-economic changes, as she said, through peaceful methods, but definitely with the active participation of the masses. Revolution, she emphasised, means not simply a series of economic reforms, but rather basic changes in the people's views on social life.

It is generally known that the progressive circles in India point to the necessity of creating such political and administrative levers as would ensure actual implementation of the progressive changes which have been planned. "In economic development, as in other fields of national activity, there is a disconcerting gap between intention and action. To bridge this gap we should boldly adopt whatever far-reaching changes in administration may be found necessary", she said. She also raised the question of substantially re-organising the ruling party "from top to bottom" so that the Congress cadres would not confine themselves to "organisation of rallies, processions and meetings" but would serve as "purposeful intermediaries between the government and the people so that programmes of development become increasingly effective at the local level".

The new prospects opening for the country's socio-political development and for deepening democracy are also an insistent demand of our times. Mrs. Gandhi has a fine sense and perspicacity in this respect. "The concepts of freedom, democracy and justice have not remained fixed but have evolved and changed over the years. People rightly look for greater content in them and seek greater participation for themselves. Each individual wants his true self to be understood, his worth to be realised."

Inheriting the democratic traditions of the liberation move-

ment. Mrs. Gandhi acts as a firm supporter of the equality of human beings irrespective of their race, nationality, language, religion and caste, just as she stands for the unity of all the peoples of India. "My whole training has been such", she said, "that I am unable to see people in compartments. To me an Indian is an Indian. I do not see him as a South Indian or a North Indian, or a Hindu or a Muslim."

In 1947, when India was divided, she boldly went to those parts of Delhi where communal clashes were taking place in an effort to stop them. Later, she consistently came out against the forces and groupings which tried to perpetuate and fan communal animosities, and to threaten the minorities. The anti-communal speeches and activities of Mrs. Gandhi evoked extensive response among minorities, strengthened the growth of the democratic forces, and played an important part in the defeat of the Right-wing forces and their parties during the 1971 and 1972 elections.

"The communal poison, along with the discords created in the name of language, caste and religion, is responsible for the economic backwardness of the country. We want to usher in this change in a democratic manner and with the participation of the people of all castes and creeds", said Mrs. Gandhi in one of her speeches in 1971.

Long before she became Prime Minister, unlike many Congress leaders of those days, who stood for the interests of some areas or states, she acted as an all-India leader. Such an outlook is of considerable importance for her entire work. In our opinion, the strengthening of India's unity is dialectically connected with the provision of favourable opportunities for the national development of all the numerous peoples of India.

This, among other things, means that the administrative divisions should conform to the distribution of the population. that, there should be provision for a more equitable economic development and, as has been pointed out by the progressive circles, improvement in the relations between the Central Government and the states, as well as improvement in relation within the states themselves, especially in those which have regional differences. What is meant is more scope for democratic initiative at local level, in the interests of developing and strengthening the country's unity on a democratic foundation.

That is why the measures taken by the government of Mrs. Gandhi in this important and complex area of socio-political relations in modern India are so vital. Among these is the formation of the states of Punjab and Haryana (on language basis), the formation of new states in north-east India (to meet the aspirations of the hill peoples), the transformation of some federal territories into states (meaning the extension of democratic rights to their population), and some other positive steps favourable for the national development of India's peoples.

India's unity is an important condition for its all-round progress. At the same time, the events of the past few years once again show very convincingly that a progressive development in the socio-economic sphere is indispensable for the country's unity, that this alone can ensure unity. The point is that the growth in the social contradictions and the activation of the Rightist forces, in the middle of the '60, spelt an obvious threat to the unity of India, hindered the healthy development of the national life of the Indian peoples and gave rise to parochial tendencies and encouraged communalism. This measure was warded off by the defeat of the reactionary and conservative

forces. India's experience since independence gives one ground to draw the conclusion that the principal socio-economic factor stimulating and cementing the unity of this huge multi-national country (in which national life is awakening and will grow, the life of the country's numerous and diverse peoples) is the growing public sector, provided it is free from the control of the monopolies. Consequently, a democratic development of the public sector and further introduction of the planning principle in the economy is an objective requirement from the angle of India's unity also. In our opinion, this circumstance has played a major part because the progressive modification of the domestic policy course being made by Mrs. Gandhi is bringing about the strengthening of India's unity. And this is an important historical service of Mrs. Gandhi's guidance of the state.

The successes of the country's foreign policy are likewise connected with the name of Mrs. Gandhi as head of government of India. The major defeat of the Rightist forces in India, who tried a number of times to basically change the principles on which the policies of the country are based, helped Mrs. Gandhi's government to consolidate and strengthen still more India's progressive positions in the international arena to participate more actively in the struggle for world peace, for the elimination of all forms of inequality, oppression, colonialism, and racism.

In rebuffing neo-colonialism, Jawaharlal Nehru elaborated and successfully implemented the essentially anti-imperialist policy of non-alignment in the interests of India's independent national development and progress. This made it possible for India to consolidate its independence—major positive factor in main-

taining international peace. Jawaharlal Nehru developed India's fruitful co-operation with the Soviet Union, which has now become a tradition. Continuing and developing her father's policy in the present condition, when there is an upsurge in India's economy. Mrs. Gandhi has put forward as an immediate goal the achievement of economic self-reliance. This progressive goal has always evoked the complete understanding and resolute support of the Soviet Union. It is a matter of common knowledge that Soviet-Indian economic co-operation has been serving from the outset the cause of India's economic independence. And we in our country spoke of this for everyone to hear even at the time when this goal seemed very far to many.

As she proclaimed the goal of economic self-reliance, Mrs. Gandhi quite definitely pointed out that even today India, like other developing countries, had to contend against the neo-colonialist aims of the imperialists, who are trying to adopt their policies to the present conditions, using at the same time the conservative forces within the country, both inherited from the colonial and feudal past and those which have appeared as a result of bourgeois development.

“Influential forces, foreign and internal, are joining and defending their privileges and attempting to provide new positions for neo-colonialism ... Neo-colonialism is not in sympathy with our efforts to achieve independence. It tries to perpetuate our unfavourable position. The prices in the world markets are manipulated in such a way that the countries producing primary commodities are constantly at a disadvantage : Technological superiority is also used against



us through unequal co-operation and agreements on payments'', declared Mrs. Gandhi in her speech at the 1970 conference of non-aligned countries in Lusaka.

Mrs. Gandhi has pointed out that 'foreign policy cannot be divorced from a country's internal policy'. That is precisely why the positive changes in India in 1969-1971 and the country's new stage in its socio-political development naturally brought about a further strengthening of the friendly co operation between India and the Soviet Union, a co-operation which is growing in spite of their differing social systems. This is reflected in the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation concluded between the Soviet Union and India in August 1971.

We are well aware of and highly appreciate Mrs. Gandhi's contribution to the signing of the Soviet-Indian Treaty on 9 August 1971, a treaty which has certainly gone down in the history of diplomacy and international relations as a document of immense political importance. Through this treaty, Mrs Gandhi made her contribution to the development of the ideas of non-alligement and active struggle for peace. The implementation of treaty and a wide and graphic development of the principles of non-alignment and of active struggle for peace have become possible as a result of a basic change in the correlation of the forces in the world arena in favour of socialism and the Afro-Asian countries fighting against imperialism. The treaty is a testimony to the friendly relations between our great nations and to the growing solidarity of the peoples of the two countries in the struggle for world peace, national freedom, social progress, and for strengthening the cause of peace in Asia and the entire world. The treaty has

cemented the friendly ties between our two countries. Besides, it helps in the further growth of these ties in the present conditions when fresh opportunities are opening for elaboration of a long term programme of economic co-operation, in mutual interest, for the solution on a long - term basis of major economic problems, and for ensuring peace and progress. The essence of the Soviet-Indian friendship, which has been developing for a number of years, pointed out Mrs. Gandhi, lies in the mutual recognition of the importance of our two countries with vast territories and man - power resources, and in the benefit which will accrue to our two nations and the whole world from the co-ordination and the strengthening of our efforts in the case of peace and progress. Mrs. Gandhi attaches special significance to the cultural relations between India and the Soviet Union. Exchanges in the sphere of culture and science are necessary for mutual understanding between nations and their all-round development.

Mrs. Gandhi has highly appraised the study and popularisation of Indian culture in our country, and pointed out the increased opportunities which the Indian people now have for familiarising themselves with the achievements of Soviet science and culture. "No other country but the Soviet Union" She said, "engages in such an extensive study of the Indian languages and literature, no other country but yours offers such extensive welcome to the works of Indian music, drama and the dancing arts. And Soviet literature, Soviet music, and your scientific achievements, which have made an immense contribution to the general well-being of man on the earth, have never been so accessible to the Indian people as now."

An important part in strengthening the friendship and

mutual understanding between our countries was played by Mrs. Gandhi's visits to the USSR, the talks she had with the Soviet leaders, and the joint documents adopted at the end of these talks.

During one of her visits, Gandhi said : "We have met as friends and our exchanges have under the large are a of agreement that exists between the Soviet Union and India. Our relation are growing steadily closer and stronger, for friendship with the Soviet Union has been and is one of the major elements in our foreign policy."

Soviet-Indian co-operation is certainly playing an increasingly important part in the present international relations. This was particularly clearly seen during the acute crisis in the sub-continent of India in 1971, when Indo-Soviet co-operation made it possible to defeat the intrigues of the imperialists and the Maoist leaders in that part of the world, and played a major part in enabling the people of Bangladesh to secure their national rights.

The positive changes which have taken place or are taking place in the subcontinent provide ever more favourable conditions for their normal development and good-neighbourly relations. An important deve'opment in this respect, has been the conclusion, in June 1972 of a bilateral agreement between India and Pa'istan which calls "that the two countries put an end to the conflict and confrontation that has hitherto marred heir relations and work for friendly and harmonious relations and the estab'lishment of durable peace in the subcontinent".

Of course, a good deal still remains to be done for the full realisation of this goal, all the more so because, as Mrs. Gandhi

put it. "there are forces in the world which would rather have confrontation in the subcontinent than peace and friendship". At the same time it is quite obvious that opportunities for a successful rebuff to these forces are now much greater than before.

At present, it is particularly essential for all the developing Asian countries to work for peace. This is underlined by the resolute condemnation by India and all peace loving mankind of the US aggressive actions in Vietnam and of the Israeli aggression in the Middle East. Speaking as far back as 1965, at a meeting of Soviet-Indian friendship in Moscow, Mrs Gandhi pointed out that the seat of danger and international instability had shifted from Europe to the developing world, to the so-called third world in Asia.

It is generally known that the Soviet Union stands for the implementation of the idea of collective security in Asia. Comrade L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, described as a long-term task the establishment of a system of collective security in those parts of the globe where the menace of a new world war and armed conflicts is concentrated. It is reported that Mrs. Gandhi welcomed the idea of a collective security system in Asia at the conference of Indian diplomats in South and South-East Asia held in New Delhi in April, 1972. The implementation of this idea, which obviously will be rather a stage-by-state measure, can bring lasting peace to Asia, a peace which, according to Mrs. Gandhi, is "not only a good ideal in itself but is also a necessity for all of us who have so much to do within our own countries for development and progress".

Indeed, quite a lot still remains to be done to achieve this goal. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious today that in a quarter of a century of independence, India has firmly strengthened its state sovereignty and unity. It has made headway in economic and cultural development, and has reached a new stage of progress, economically and culturally. India's positive role in the international arena has grown. Mrs. Gandhi has been and still is making an important contribution to these achievements of her great country, and to the cause of international peace. An outstanding national leader of India, she knows how to respond to the aspirations of the people and the demands of the times.

When I was invited to write an article on Mrs. Gandhi, I agreed to do so with pleasure. My study of India's history, especially the history of the struggle of the Indian people for independence and building a new country, has led me to the conclusion that Mrs. Gandhi is an outstanding leader, a fiery patriot of her country, a woman of exceptional personal merits. For a long time and with increasing interest, I have been following not only Mrs. Gandhi's political activities, but also her articles in the press revealing the penetrating intellect of a real thinker and scholar. I was very much impressed by her *Selected Speeches* which, like a number of her previous works, shows her personal contribution to the tackling of a number of cardinal theoretical issues connected with the solution of the vital problems of present-day India and some other Asian countries. As a historian, I particularly admire Mrs. Gandhi's sincere interest in the problems of spiritual culture, spiritual heritage, and the historical experience of India and other countries. I greatly appreciate Mrs. Gandhi's desire to perceive contemporaneity in the context of history, and history in the light of

contemporaneity, like her search, in the treasures of the past, for such humanistic values which could serve as a support in the current struggle of the Indian people for progress, democracy and social justice.

This was one of the reasons why I undertook to write an article on Mrs. Gandhi's activities and views. Yet, there was also another reason : I have had occasion to see Mrs. Gandhi a number of times, to hear her speeches, and to talk to her. These meetings and talks made an indelible impression on me. I recall the international seminar in honour of Jawaharlal Nehru. One of the delegates was his daughter. Her presence and her talks with the participants in the seminar lent a special significance to that forum of scholars. We were all charmed by Mrs. Gandhi's amazing personality, her democracy, sincerity, sharp intellect, and inexhaustible energy. I remember her particularly clearly participating in the work of the seminar "Against Neo-colonialism, for Social progress". We, the seminar participants, were received by Mrs. Gandhi in the lawns of her residence. We literally showered her with questions on the acute and vital problems of our times. Mrs. Gandhi's confident and detailed answers did not leave the slightest doubt that we had been fortunate in meeting such a major and talented state leader of a great power, who realises the role and importance of her country in the present-day world and who is quite determined to follow her independent course in domestic and foreign policies. I recall her words : "India's foreign policy is a policy of peace and friendship with all nations. We have been supporting and will continue to support the national-liberation movement in Afro-Asian countries".

At a kind invitation from Mrs. Gandhi I had the good

fortune to visit her home where, surrounded by sincere friends, she displayed her many-faceted personality, lively intellect, unusual simplicity, and a high level of inbred culture. As a scholar, I appreciated very much the great attention which Mrs. Gandhi gave us men of science and culture, as well as her sincere interest in the problems of history, problems of social and cultural progress of nations, and relations between them.

An upsurge of the liberation movement, the unfolding of the people's genius, the liberation of the creative forces of the masses, the growth in their creativity and activity invariably bring into the arena of the political life major personalities of great talent and determination. These personalities are always continuers of the best traditions of their people and their country. At the same time, they further develop these traditions in keeping with the new spirit of the times, its requirements and demands. Their activities seem to fuse the voice of the past, the requirements of the present, and the call of the future.

One of such personalities is Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, a major state and political leader of our times.





THE VISION OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Ravinder Kumar

As we approach the last quarter of the twentieth century, it is necessary for us to re-examine the ideals of Jawaharlal Nehru who played a distinguished role in the struggle for political freedom in India, and as Prime Minister from 1947 to 1964, laid the basis for a modern industrial society in our midst, scientific in temper, socialist in content, democratic in spirit and secular in its ethos.

What was the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru ? What were the distinctive constituents of this vision ? How did it influence the course of the freedom struggle before 1947 ? Equally, how did this vision shape the policies which he adopted as Prime Minister.

Even as a young scholar in Harrow, Jawaharlal Nehru took a close interest in British politics, and a passionate interest in the course of the freedom struggle in his country. His political views at this juncture are reflected in his letters to his father, Motilal Nehru, letters which reveal his conviction that a militant struggle would have to be waged against the British Government before India became a free country.

National Movement

This was an era in which the National movement in India had

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found organised expression in the Indian National Congress. Furthermore, rival groups of nationalists called 'Moderates' and 'Extremists' were seeking to acquire control over the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru had no hesitation in showing his preference for the latter. He believed that India could fulfil her destiny only as a free nation ; and he also believed that the extremist stance was the one most likely to win freedom for India. Writing to Motilal Nehru on the cleavage which took place within the Congress in 1907, he observed : "We expected lively things at Surat and our expectations were more than fulfilled. It is of course a great pity that such a split should have occurred. But it was sure to come and the sooner we have it, the better. I firmly believe that there will hardly be any so-called Moderates left in a very few years' time. By the methods they are following at present, they are simply hastening the doom of their party."

When Jawaharlal returned to Allahabad in 1912 to take up legal practice in the High Court, the radicalism which he had acquired as a young scholar in the United Kingdom encouraged him to associate himself with nationalist politics in the country. However, the nationalist politics of the times left him with a certain sense of disquiet. The Congress, despite the heroic days of the Swadeshi movement, was still largely an organisation representing the educated classes. Its annual sessions were tame affairs, where a middle class leadership, divorced from the rural as well as the urban masses, attempted to forge constitutional weapons that would further the cause of nationalism. Even the struggle for Home Rule initiated by Annie Basant, an orator of outstanding skill, captured the imagination of the intelligentsia

but failed to stir the peasants whose participation was essential to any truly popular movement in India.

With the Saint from Sabarmati

At this juncture, Nehru came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi, and discerned in his message as well as in the novel technique of satyagraha, a unique weapon for the resolution of India's political problems. The quiet yet forceful personality of the Saint from Sabarmati created a profound impression on him. When the Mahatma appealed to the people of India to protest non-violently against the iniquitous legislation known as the Rowlatt Act, Jawaharlal was jubilant. The idea of defying the laws of an alien government which had lost its moral legitimacy, through militant yet non-violent means, appealed enormously to his youthful imagination. He wrote in his Autobiography: "When I first read about Gandhi's proposals in the newspapers, my reaction was one of tremendous relief. Here at last was a way out of the tangle, a method of action which was straight and open and possibly effective."

Jawaharlal's participation in the Gandhian movement of the 1920S provided him with that sense of mission, and that ideological poise, for which he had been searching since his return from the United Kingdom in 1912. The plunge into the national movement also brought him into contact with the rural masses of Uttar Pradesh, and subsequently, of the country as a whole. He has left graphic account of the new horizons which this experience opened up before him: "I went there (to the country side around Allahabad) with some colleagues and we spent three days in the villages far from the railway and even the pucca road. That visit was a revelation to me. We found the

whole countryside afire with enthusiasm and full of strange excitement (As we moved from village to village) the people would come streaming out or even running as fast as they could. They were in miserable rags, men and women, but their eyes glistened and seemed to expect strange happenings which would, as if by a miracle, put an end to their long misery (A) new picture of India seemed to arise before me."

The collapse of the non-cooperation movement in 1922 posed several crucial questions to which the ideology of the Mahatma did not provide any answers. The rural no less than urban masses had been drawn into an epic national movement by the Mahatma, who had also captured the imagination of young nationalists like Jawaharlal Nehru. Yet it was not clear, at least to young men brought up in the intellectual traditions of the West, what the Mahatma had to offer to those whom he had drawn into the anti-imperialist struggle. Nehru, therefore, turned to socialist ideology to find an answer to the questions facing the national movement in India. Was this movement, he asked himself, a purely political phenomenon ? Or was it equally a social and economic phenomenon ? What was the relationship between national politics in India, on the one hand, and the international politics that determined relations between the capitalist democracies of the West and the countries of the Third World, on the other.

Socialist Ideology

Jawaharlal Nehru found illumination in his critical readings of socialist literature, as well as in his journey to Europe in 1926, to attend a meeting of the International Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism, and to the Soviet Union

slightly later. The national movement in India, he realised, to be properly appreciated had to be placed in a much wider context. It was an integral part of the struggle of oppressed peoples everywhere for liberation from bondage. Moreover, this struggle could not be viewed as a purely political struggle. It was equally a social and economic struggle of the peasants and the workers against their oppressors within India and without. Jawaharlal Nehru voiced his new perception of the freedom movement repeatedly before peasant and working class audiences, and also before the youth of the country. But the most forceful expression of this perception is to be found in his presidential address before the Lahore Congress of 1929. "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican and am no believer in kings and princes or in the order which produced the modern kings of industry." Jawaharlal Nehru stated in an open declaration of faith. The conflict between nationalism and imperialism could best be understood through socialist ideology, which could also help resolve the internal problems facing the country, in particular those of the peasants and the workers. "India means the peasantry and labour, and to the extent that we raise them and satisfy their wants will we succeed in our tasks", Nehru observed, "and the measure of the strength of our national movement will be the measure of their adherence to it... (The) Congress, it is said, must hold the balance fairly between capital and labour and zamindar and peasant. But the balance has been and is terribly weighted on one side and to maintain the status quo is to maintain injustice and exploitation. The only way to right it is to do away with the domination of any one class over another".



The vision of a socialist order which Jawaharlal Nehru now propounded from the platform of the Indian national Congress several distinctive features. It married a concern for the welfare of the urban and rural masses with a discerning appreciation of the principles of liberal democracy. It linked the struggle which India was waging against British imperialism with the wider struggle of the Third World against the capitalist, and increasingly, also the fascist countries of Europe. Most important of all, it related the principles of equity and social justice, as defined in the classics of socialism, of the intellectual heriatage of India, which Jawaharlal Nehru was to capture with surpassing sensitivity in **The Discovery of India**. The people of India, rich and poor, urban and rural folk, and particularly the youth, responded to the ideals of Jawaharlal Nehru in a manner they did not respond to the ideals of any other nationalist leader of his generation.

Agrarian Reforms

When Jawaharlal Nehru became Prime minister of India in 1947, he had already formulated the world-view, which was to shape his policies for the next seventeen years. Immediately after the passing problems arising out of the transfer of power had been tackled, he turned to the social and economic reconstruction of the country in the light of his socialist vision. The frist major task taken up under his leadership was the introduction of agrarian reform in the country. In State after State, legislation was enacted which abolished the great concentrations of landed wealth—the zamindaries of Bengal, Bihar, Avadh and elsewhere—which the British had created in order to conjure into existence a reactionary class tied to them through bonds of

interest and sentiment. The agrarian reforms of the 1950s went a long way towards eliminating those unholy concentrations of landed wealth which stood in the way of economic development in rural society. These reforms were accompanied by a programme of community development, which attempted to stimulate the creativity of the rural classes by encouraging an integrated approach to economic growth. The activation of the rural economy, partly through legislative reform and partly also through developmental activity, was accompanied by a massive attempt at creating a modern industrial economy in India through planning. Jawaharlal Nehru's attempt to stimulate planned economic development in India, although it drew upon similar experiments elsewhere, showed a sensitive awareness of the realities of the Indian situation. The seminal industrial policy resolutions of 1948 and 1956 created three parallel and complimentary channels of industrial activity. The State was to retain control over the commanding heights of the economy and reserve to itself "all industries of basic and strategic importance," Industrial undertakings which came next in the order of importance were to be of common concern to State and private enterprise ; and private enterprise was given a free hand in the development of light industries. The industrial policy adopted by the Government of India looked upon public and private enterprise as complementary channels of activity under the overarching control of the State ; and this policy underpinned the machinery of planning devised by Jawaharlal Nehru.

The basic Approach

Perhaps the vision informing the developmental activity set

into motion by Jawaharlal Nehru is captured most faithfully of all in his essay entitled, "The Basic Approach" which appeared in the AICC Economic Review of August 15, 1958. In this essay he draws the different ideas which influenced him into a grand design that can be looked upon as a blueprint for the future of India. "The Basic Approach" stressed, at the outset, the lessons which Jawaharlal Nehru had learnt from the Mahatma. The problems facing India, and the Third World could best be resolved by rejecting the notion that class and sectarian conflict was the great flywheel of history. The objective of material welfare had to be married with moral purpose and moral passions to conjure into existence the 'good society'. Again, humanity faced perennial questions with a new urgency in the nuclear age. "What is the meaning of life?" Jawaharlal Nehru asked. "The old days of faith do not appear to be adequate, less than answer the questions of today. In a changing world, living conditions should be a continuous adjustment to the changes and happenings. It is the lack of this adjustment that creates conflicts." In facing such questions, socialism, as Jawaharlal Nehru understood the term, provided answers which were both creative and satisfactory. "Socialism tells us that the general matter of social political and intellectual life in a society is governed by its productive resources. As those productive resources change and develop, the life and thinking of the community changes. Herein lay the answer to India's problems and equally to the manner in which these problems could be tackled."

Moral Inspiration and Leadership

What is the relevance of Jawaharlal Nehru's vision to the

challenges which India faces today ? Perhaps no simple answer can be provided to this question. This is so because we live in an age in which our problems flow from the successes achieved under the aegis of Jawaharlal Nehru ; successes in the realm of the industrial no less than the rural economy ; successes also, in devising a polity which, despite all its shortcomings, sustains a society epic in its scale, and obliges the Third World to turn to India repeatedly for moral inspiration and leadership of vision. Yet if Jawaharlal Nehru succeeded in fulfilling the objectives which he had placed before himself, the spirit which inspired him—a spirit which combined tolerance with passion ; concern for the impoverished with an awareness of the need for economic growth ; a willingness to innovate with a regard for the grandeur of tradition— can still provide us with moral poise and intellectual sustenance in facing the challenge which confront us, within India and without, as we move into the last quarter of the twentieth century.



THE KHUDAI KHIDMATGAR MOVEMENT IN THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

Girdhari Lal Puri

The Khudai Khidmatgar Movement in the N. W. F. P., under Badshah Khan's leadership, forms the most glorious Chapter in the history of our freedom struggle from 1930 to 1947. Without the martyrdom of thousands of freedom fighters from among the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs,—men women and even children of this province, under the tricoloured Congress banner, the peoples of both India and Pakistan could not have enjoyed the fruits of freedom. They were firmly committed to the creed of non violence of the brave and selfless service to the humanity. It is, therefore, most befitting that when we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the martyrdom of the great sons of India we keep out memories fresh about the Khudai Khidmatgars.

Badshah Khan had been carrying on his social, humanitarian and educational work against the Pakhtoons for well over a decade before he and his comrades decided to set up a quasi military body of volunteers called the Khudai Khidmatgars (Servants of God) in November 1929. A year earlier he had started his monthly journal *Pakhtoon*. On the title page of the first few issues appeared a short poem by Khadim, "Years of a slave in servitude are nothing as compared with a single hour of freedom spent even in agonies of death". Subsequently, the title page had a crescent and a star with his son, Ghani's touching lines :

If I a slave, lie buried in a grave,
under a resplendent tomb stone,
Respect it not, spit on it.

When I die, and not be bathed, in martyr's blood,
None should his tongue pollute, offering prayears me,
O' Mother, with what face will you wail for me,
If I am not torn to pieces by British guns ?

Either I trun this wretched land of mine into a Garden of Eden
or I wipe out the lanes and homes of Pakhtoons.

The Pledge

Every one who aspired to become a Khudai Khidmatgar, declared on solemn oath. "I am a Khudai Khidmntgar, and as God needs no service I shall serve Him by serving His creatures selflessly. I shall never use violence. I shall not retaliate to take revenge, and I shall foregive anyone who indulges in oppression and excesses against me. I shall not be a party to any intrigue, family feuds and enmity and I shall treat every Pakntoon as my brother and comrade. I shall give up evil customs and practices. I shall lead a simple life, do good and refrain from wrong doing. I shall develop good character and cultivate good habits. I shall be fearless and be prepared for any sacrifice."

They adopted dark red uniforms because their white clothes became dirty very easily. They marched, in military formation, but without any arms to the tune of bag-pipes with banners aloft, from village to village. On the march they sang :

We are the army of God,
By death or wealth unmoved.
We march, our leader and we,

Ready to die.
We serve and we love
Our people and our Cause.
Freedom is our goal.
Our lives the price we pay.

Badshah Khan and his associates, by undertaking such tours produced a level of province wide cooperation, previously unknown in the N. W. F. P. They established a party network in Peshawar Valley which broke down the political isolation of its villages, particularly in Charsadda, Mardan and Swabi Tehsils where they enlisted members of the traditional elite as local organisers. In Charsadda alone, the government estimated the number of Red Shirts at the end of March 1930 at over 2000. Thanks to the repressive measures adopted by the Government their number rose to 80,000 by September 1930 and nearly three lakhs during the period of Gandhi—Irwin truce in 1931.

At the Lahore Congress in December, 1929 Badshah Khan promised to work personally for the Congress and to commit his organisation to the Civil Disobedience Campaign. The Frontier Congress in Peshawar deferred to him in preparing for the agitation because of his commanding political reputation and his control of the only party in the Province with rural roots. He made a two week tour of the southern districts of Kohat, Bannu and Dehra Ismail Khan towards the end of March, 1930 to prepare the ground for the visit of the enquiry committee which the Congress High Command had decided to send to investigate the hateful Frontier Crimes Regulations. Addressing the people at Bannu, he said, "I belong to that party which intends to free the country from the clutches of the tyrant English people, who

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have not only ruined India but almost the whole Islamic World, who are responsible for the destruction of Afghanistan and whose hands are still red with the blood of innocent Afghan Martyrs. Oh ! Pakhtun brothers, what has happened to you ? Your brothers and neighbours. the Wazirs, who live only ten miles away have shed their blood in guarding their bare hills from foreign interference, yet you can do nothing for your own fertile country. You should learn a lesson. There is no better Jihad from the point of view of Islam than to free your own country from slavery and a foreign yoke."

This was the tenor of his speeches throughout the tour.

On April 19th and 20th, 1930 an annual Conference of Badshah Khan's Azad School at Utmanzai was organised. This was a representative gathering of the Afghan Jirga, Khudai Khidmatgar members and a large contingent of Peshawar Congress men and Khilaphists and representatives of parties in Kohat etc. At the close of the meeting Khan Mir Hilali announced on behalf the Peshawar Congress that picketing of liquor shops would commence on April 23rd, 1930. The Congress FCR Committee was expected to start its bearing in Peshwar the same day.

The Chief Commissioner's Miscalculations

Little did the Chief Commissioner, Sir H. N. Bolton realise that Badshah Khan and his associates had created such an awakening throughout the province that the government's allies would be quite helpless to stem its tide. Bolton had all along been assuring the Viceroy, Lord Irwin that the Frontier politicians posed no law and order problem. He took no note of the mounting tension and even on the 19th April he confidently

assured him that "the tranquility prevailing here is largely due to the level headed loyalty of the people of this province " Lord Irwin had toured the N. W. F. P. in mid April. His reply, ironically, was made public on April 23, 1930—the red letter day in the history of our freedom struggle. He had said, 'In many places I visited under your guidance .. I noticed with great pleasure the general air of tranquility and the confidence reposed by the people in you and in the officers working under your control.' Little did Lord Irwin visualise that the upheaval during the next week would so overwhelm Bolton that he would suffer a nervous breakdown and would at his own pathetic request, have to leave the province on April 30, 1930.

Along the Peshawar border the conflict reached such proportions that Lord Irwin had to wire to the Secretary of State on August 11, 1930—"The whole of Peshawar District as far as Attock must be considered in (a) state of war."

The movement had its first baptism of fire on April 23rd when, according to rough popular estimate nearly two to three hundred innocent people were killed in Kissa Khani Bazar, Peshawar where the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, H. A. F. Metcalfe "perpetrated a shocking piece of brutality", in the words of Vithal Bhai Inquiry Committee Report.

What led to this tragedy ? The Government banned the entry of the Congress FCR Inquiry Committee on April 22 and issued warrants of arrest for eleven Peshawar Congressmen to prevent the picketing of liquor shops in Peshawar from April 23. Syed Agha Lal Badshah, Rahim Baksh Ghaznavi, Dr. C. C. Ghosh, Ali Gul Khan, Paira Khan, Roshan Lal, Maulana Abdul Rahim Popalzai, Abdur Rahman Siddiqi and Abdur Rahman Riya were taken into custody from their homes on the morning of April 23

but Ghulam Rabbani Sethi and Allah Baksh Barqi, the remaining two, had already gone to the Congress office, thereby setting the stage for the upheaval which made the day a milestone in the Independence Movement.

Vithal Bhai Patel Inquiry Committee, appointed a fortnight after the Kissa Khani shooting was banned entry into the N. W. F. P. It had therefore to conduct its proceedings from Rawalpindi. It examined 79 witnesses within a week and received various reports. Its 350 page report was promptly banned by the Government. Nevertheless, it had a wide circulation and its findings had popular acceptance.

The Kissa Khani Bazar Firing

Let us first consider the findings of the inquiry committee appointed by the British Government consisting of two judges. Shah Muhammad Sulaiman and H. R. Panckridge to enable the Government "to be prepared for similar occurrences in future." This Committee estimated crowd casualties at thirty killed and thirty three wounded, but they conceded that their figures were probably incomplete. The report further conceded that "The Peshawar Deputy Commissioner, H. A. F. Metcalfe, entered the Kissa Khani Bazar with four armoured cars in the turnout at least one car accidently ran over people congregated near the "thana" A despatch motorcycle rider who accompanied them without order was killed..... Metcalfe was knocked unconscious on the steps of the "thana" while urging people to disperse. On recovering he gave orders to one of the remaining cars, which had come under assault, to open fire with its machine guns. A burst of twenty rounds temporarily cleared the streets, but the crowd reassembled, building wooden barri-

cedes from which to attack the car. Troops were sent to protect the vehicle only to be attacked. Failing to ward off their assailants in other ways, they fired thirty one rounds, scattering the crowd. A party of soldiers then advanced to the end of Kissa Khani Bazar firing sixty four rounds at the crowd left behind and at people on surrounding roof tops who were throwing bricks".

The initial government inspired garbed reports which reached Gandhiji suggested that nonviolence had not been maintained. He wrote in 'Young India' dated 1st May, 1930, "The people of Peshawar meant well, I have no doubt. They are perhaps more impatient than I am to win freedom. But nobody can get freedom in this land except through nonviolence. The way lies not through the burning of armoured cars and taking lives of the administrators or the government officers, it lies through development of organised self suffering."

The Patel report, however, disputed almost every detail of the official account. It contended that the police were not obstructed at the Congress office, there was no disturbance outside the 'thana' and the crowd which was nonviolent had started to disperse voluntarily when the armoured car recklessly rushed into the bazar without warning ; crushing twelve to fourteen people. The motorcyclist died after falling beneath one of the cars, the armoured car caught fire for unknown reasons, the allegation that the crowd was responsible for burning of the car was an afterthought

Govt. Finding Disputed

The report observed, "The Deputy Commissioner . . . ordered the crew of the armoured car to open fire. As a result of this firing several people were killed and wounded.... Attempts

were made by one or two outsiders to persuade the crowd to disperse and the authorities to remove the troops . . . The people were willing to disperse if they were allowed to remove the dead bodies and the injured persons and if the armoured car and troops were removed . The authorities on the other hand, expressed their determination not to remove the armoured cars and troops. The result was that the people did not disperse and were prepared to receive bullets and lay down their lives. The second round of firing went on intermittently for more than three hours not only in the Kissa Khani Bazar but also in the bye lanes. A large number of people between 200 and 300 were killed or wounded.

"Five or six Khilafat volunteers who were among those engaged in removing the dead and the wounded were also killed. Several corpses, therefore, could not be removed and were, it is alleged, taken in a lorry to some unknown destination and disposed of. The Khilafat volunteers and others were able to remove about sixty dead bodies mostly from the bye lanes to the Khilafat office. A large number of the wounded were taken to that office and after providing primary medical aid sent by Dr. Khan Sahib to the Lady Healing Hospital. The Govt. did not provide any facilities for first aid to the wounded and did nothing to minimise the extent of bloodshed caused by the merciless firing.

"For the next two or three days Peshawar became a hell owing to the atrocities of the British troops.

Firing On Funeral Procession

"On May 31 when the Sulaiman Committee was holding its inquiry in Peshawar, the military opened fire on people who

were taking for burial the dead bodies of two children alleged to have been shot dead by a British soldier by accident. As a result of this firing, at least ten people were killed and twenty five wounded. It has all along been a reign of terror in Peshawar. The province has become a forbidden land to the outside world. To screen the ugly happenings from the public eye, it is isolated from the rest of India and no public leader is allowed to step in there, see things for himself and exposes the abuses of administration. Methods no less atrocious are being pursued in other parts of Peshawar district and also in other districts of the province where the Congress has influence.

"In spite of all this the the spirits of the people has remained unbroken and strict non violence has been observed".

The Garhwal Rifles

Troops patrolled the streets of Peshawar to maintain order on April 24 but that evening two platoons of the 2/18 Royal Garhwal Rifles refused to enter the city "on the ground that they would not fire on their people". They were promptly arrested and disarmed. At the Court Martial proceedings the men said, "We will not shoot on unarmed brethren, because India's army is to fight India's enemies without. You may blow us from the guns, if you like." Seventeen men were sentenced—one to transportation for life, another to fifteen years imprisonment and the rest to various terms of rigorous imprisonment from three to ten years. In spite of his best efforts Gandhiji could not secure their release at the time of the Gandhi Irwin Pact.

Disobedience of the Garhwalis led the provincial administrators to question the reliability of all Indian soldiers. Fearing for the security of the entire Empire, and not just its border defences,



Bolton, the Chief Commissioner of the N. W. F. P. sent telegram to Lord Irwin saying, "I suggest for consideration for your Excellency the desirability of ensuring considerable reinforcements of British troops in India."

Rather than rely on troops of questionable loyalty, the government withdrew all soldiers from the city on the night of April 24, leaving the task of preserving order to influential private citizens while it collected dependable forces. The strategy did not work, for the anti government feelings aroused by the arrests were so intense that those prominent citizens who were still sympathetic to the government could not stop the nationalists from taking advantage of the authorities' absence. For the next nine days the Congress had de facto control of the city. It created a parallel administration to run the city, using its volunteers to patrol the streets man the city gates and apprehend criminals. Its leaders also expanded the organisation in the city, mobilised in near by villages and corresponded with tribal leaders for support. The police, the sole government authority left in Peshawar, was overwhelmed by these conditions. The government admitted that if they were functioning at all they were doing so on sufferance.

Badshah Khan's Arrest

After addressing a mass meeting at Utmanzai on April 23, exhorting people to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement, Badshah Khan accompanied by Abdul Akbar Khan, Main Ahmad Shah and Sarfaraz Khan, left for Peshawar by car to investigate the reports about the shooting in Kissa Khani. But they were arrested at Naki police Thana and brought back to Chassadda. Thousands of people surrounded the jail at Chassa-

dda. Dr. Khan Sahib hastened to the spot and pacified them. The same afternoon they were removed to Mardan under the cavalry escort. Next day were taken to Risalpur and sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment under Section 40 of the Frontier Crimes Regulations. Later they were removed to the Gujrat Jail in the Punjab.

A Reign Of Terror

A reign of terror was let loose at Utmanzai, Chassadda and, in fact, all over the province.

The firing at Takar in Mardan Jail on May 25 and the Hathi Khel incident on August 25 caused widespread resentment. At Takkar the police resorted to firing to disperse the crowd which had assembled to protest against the arrest of the local Congress leaders and had been stopped at Gujar Garhi. An English officer was alleged to have been killed during the clash. Three days later the police and troops surrounded Takkar and during the clash that followed several villagers were killed.

Next to District Peshawar, Civil Disobedience was most widespread and sustained in Bannu. Space does not permit me to deal with the various phases of the movement in Bannu and surrounding tribal areas. A brief official version of the Hathi Khel "massacre", however, must be given here.

On August 24 troops and Frontier Constabulary were sent to break up a gathering at Spina Tangi "part of which", according to official version, "was armed." While civil officials negotiated with Mullah Fazi-Ladir for peaceful dispersal of the crowd, a British Officer set off a pitched battle by advancing towards the site of the meeting. According to official accounts, "Captain Ashroft and eight ranks were killed while ten were wounded.

In the fighting which ensued some forty of the Mulla's party were killed and many other wounded. Seventy persons also were arrested. The Mulla himself died subsequently of wounds".

The official assessment was that by demonstrating the authorities' readiness to use force the Hathi Khel clash caused Civil Disobedience Movement to fall off sharply in Bannu.

In Dehra Ismail Khan the Civil Disobedience Movement led by Parta Khan and his wife Yashodha Devi was quite strong. The Police and the Frontier Constabulary occupied the city on May 30, closed the offices of the Congress and Naujawan Bharat Sabha and arrested fourteen active Congress workers. The women took out a procession that afternoon in protest. Mr. Isemonger, pointed his revolver at the women. A Sikh youth, Bhagwan Singh, rushed forward and grabbing the wrist of the officer said, 'Are you not ashamed to shoot at women?' He got unnerved, dropped the revolver and left the place in shame.

The Official Version

The Government of India Publications, *India 1930-31*, while summing up the gave situation in the N. W. F. P. stated, 'In August 1930 Martial Law had to be imposed and kept in force until following January. Almost immediately after the occurrence of the Peshawar riots symptoms of unrest began to appear all along the Frontier from Hazari district to Dehra Ismail Khan. The activities of the Royal Air Force over the tribal territory between May and September assisted greatly towards final restorations, of order. During the whole period covered by several tribal risings and incursions, the troops had also to be



widely deployed in helping the civil authorities to uphold the administration throughout the settled districts in the province. The task of the military was usually to surround the dis-affected towns and villages under cover of darkness in order that civil officers might arrest at day break and frequently it proved necessary to maintain the cordons round centres of disaffection for days at a time

"The tribesmen gave the following ultimatum to the British : 'Release Badshah Khan and Malang Baba (the naked Fakir, Gandhi), release the Khudai Khidmatgars and stop the atrocities and repression against the Pakhtuns. If you don't we shall declare war on you,' They had also demanded the release of "inquilab" thinking it was a person. The universal slogan among the tribesmen was Inquilab Zindabad."

Salar Shah Walli's Martyrdom

Before I end this homage to the Martyrs in the N. W. F. P. I would like to pay my respectful homage to the martyrdom of Sadar Salar Wali of Mardan during the Thatta political conference in District Campbellpur in April, 1939. At the request of the District Congress Committee Campbellpur, of which I was General Secretary, we had come over to Thatta along with a contingent of Khudai Khidmatgars from Mardan. Salar Shah Wali was leading his batch of Khudai Khidmatgars at the head of the inaugural procession of the Conference holding aloft with great pride our tri-coloured Congress Flag. All of a sudden a group of Muslim Leaguers attacked him with spears and he died on the spot with Allah-O-Akbar on his lips. But he held fast to the national flag. May his soul rest in peace.

Khudai Khidmatgar Movement

Inspite of the stone throwing, and other provocative activities by the Muslim Leaguers, the Khudai Khidmatgars and the entire procession headed by Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew. President of the Punjab Provincial Congress remained completely non-violent. A number of national leaders, including Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, visited the spot in Thatta where Shah Wali fell to pay their respectful homages. A number of Congress workers had to undergo various terms of imprisonment because of the political cases instituted against them after this incident.

Salar Shah Wali's martyrdom created a great awakening amongst the masses in Campbellpur and Congress Committees were set up in a number of villages.

Badshah Khan was deeply touched when I mentioned this to him during his recent visit to India. He asked me to find out similar cases in which the Khudai Khidmatgars laid down their lives outside the NWFP during the freedom struggle.

The Khudai Khidmatgar movement is an epic of selfless sacrifice. It gave the same messages of love and service that Lord Budha, Jesus Christ and Holy Prophet Mohamed gave the world. As Gandhiji said to Badshah Khan at Utmanzai in October 1938, "Times change and systems decay But it is my faith that in the result it is only nonviolence and things that are based on non-violence that will endure Non violence transcends time and space."

Badshah Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgars whose number was nearly one hundred thousand in a population of about three millions when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandiji visited the NWFP in 1937-38-39 have through their life long dedication truly sown the seed of non-violence of the brave in a soil which played such a dominant role in spreading Lord Buddha's

message, "Hatred never ceases by hatred : it ceases by love alone. That is the eternal law". May it help to revive the true spirits of Islam, which according to Gandhiji, Maulana Azad and Badshah Khan is, as the word implies, unadulterated peace.

"The lesson which they (people) should learn from Bhagat singh is to die in a manly and bold manner so that India might live."

—*Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru*



THE EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL FLAG

—Chinmohan Sehanavis,

As far as we know, India never had a real National Flag of her own either in ancient times or during the middle ages. Though the Maurya, Gupta and Mughal Empires extended over the major part of our Indian territory, there is no evidence of the use of a flag as a symbol of our national unity. The Garuda banner associated with the Guptas was more a dynastic coat-of-arms than a national flag. The saffron banner associated with Shivaji and Guru Ramdas, too, was a symbol of Maratha pride.

The reason for this is not far to seek : no objective, historical basis at the time, for the creation of a national flag nor even for the emergence of an Indian nation which that flag was to symbolise. Happenings in the country even today often drive home the fact that the process of nation-building is a long process which is yet to be completed.

The elements making for the building of our nation began to crystallise only after rise of British power in India. Nationalism was even then only an emerging force, slowly gripping the minds of our people. Our national consciousness was, therefore still not powerful enough to shape itself into an urge for a national flag of our own. Our sense of the times, however manifes-

ted itself circuitously rather than directly. In January, 1831 Raja Rammohan Roy, sailing to England, limped his way from his own ship to a French ship at Capetown harbour, to greet the French tri-colour with a cry of 'Glory', Glory to French !' (Collet, Raja Rammohan Roy. p. 308). A few days earlier, on Christmas morning in 1830, the French tricolour had adorned the steeple of the Ochterlony Monument in Calcutta alongside, of course, the Union Jack Dr. Bimanbihari Majumdar ascribes this act to the 'Young Bengal' group of our Hindu College or to some 'Anglo-Indian enthusiast' (History of political Thought from Rammohan to Dayananda, volume I, p. 84). It has to be remembered that to the progressives of the entire world, the French tricolour was at that time not merely the national flag of a particular country, but the symbol of the battle-cry of the Revolution—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

People, however, cannot indefinitely remain satisfied with some one else's flag however glorious the values it might stand for. They ; naturally, seek a national flag of their own. Was there such a flag at the time of 1857 uprising ? We do not know for certain. But a popular song of that period known as the 'Flag song of 1857' ends up with these lines :—

Hindu, Mussalman Sikh hamara

Bhai bhai, pyara,

Ich hai Jhanda Azadika,

Use salam hamara.

However as yet we have no idea of the design of the flag to which this song is supposed to be dedicated. Dr Bhupendra-nath Dutt gives an account of a later initiative in this direction thus : 'Dr. Phanindranath Bose, M.A. Ph.D., reports in his

Life an organisation called the Indian National Society to establish amity between the Hindus and Muslims. Members of this organization moved in a procession through the city streets, with a national flag in hands, and singing a national song' (Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram. pp. 231-2)

Sris Chandra Bose was associated with the well-known Panini Publishers of Allahabad, and was the elder Brother of Major Bamandas Bose, author of such well known titles as The Rise of Christian Power in India, Ruin of Indian Trades and Industries etc. We have no information as to the design of the national flag as he had conceived it or even the words of the national song that his follgwers used to sing on the streets of Lahere in 1883. However, our political aspiration, at that time, had not yet gone beyond the stage of asking for a moderate dose of self-government. Hence this flag could not have been designed as the flag of an independent India.

Dr. Dutta writes : Rajnarain Bose, in his Briddha Hindur Asha (The Hopes of an Old Hindu), held that the lotus is the national symbol of India. He suggested a design for a national flag, quoting from the newspaper Liberal, in circa 1888'. (op. cit., p. 232). We do not, however, know anything more about the design, and the design is not likely to have found a concrete shape ever. We shall have occasion however to show how Bose's ideas came to influence later initiatives in this regard.

The quest for a national flag assumed a greater urgency with the Swadeshi movement, described by Rajani Palme Dutt, India Today, as the 'First Great Wave of our National Struggle.' Indeed, it is the tri-colour flag that emerged at that time, that has, by and large, gradually evolved into the national flag of

independent India, after undergoing, of course, many changes during the four intervening decades. Yet it is not difficult to trace a continuity from this phase onwards.

Surendranath Ghosh's biography of Sachindra Prasad Bose gives an account of the origin of the national flag during the Swadeshi days. Sachindra Prasad Bose was the son-in-law of the moderate Brahmo leader—Krishna Kumar Mitra, and was himself one of the pioneers of the students' movement in India. The account reads: 'Sachindra Prasad Bose was a close follower of Sir Surendranath Banerjee. In 1906, on the advice of a friend, he pleaded with Sir Surendranath for a national flag of our own. Sir Surendranath accepted the proposal from his disciple. He said, 'Design a national flag and show it to me'. Bose and his friend went back elated to design a flag. The flag they designed, was in three colours—green, yellow and red. Sir Surendranath called a meeting for consultations. It was attended by Sir Ashutosh Chowdhury, Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi and others (according to Krishna Kumar's son, Sukumar Mitra, the meeting held at the Indian Association Hall, was attended by leaders from all the districts—C.S.). They decided to add seven lotuses symbolising the seven Indian provinces of the time on a base of the three colours, placed according to the positions of the provinces on the map. Sir Surendranath went on looking at the flag with great interest and affection, and steered the proposal to a unanimous approval.

This flag was hoisted for the first time at Greer Park, on August 7, 1906, which was being observed as 'Boycott Day'. Narendranath Sen ceremonially prayed for the flag, Bhupendranath Bose handed it over to Sir Surendranath Bose handed it over to Sir Surendranath, who hoisted it to the bursting of a

hundred and one crackers. The flag was also hoisted on the rostrum of the 1906 Session of the National Congress held in Calcutta, under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naroji. The delegates' badges, too, had the same tri-colour design. This tricolour was the first flag of the Congress. With changing sentiments, the flag has come to assume its present design' (pp. 32-3).

The friend who had advised Sachindra prasad Bose to raise the question of a national flag with Sir Surendranath, and who had later assisted him in designing the flag has now been identified as Sukumar Mitra, son of Krishna Kumar Mitra. Sukumar Mitra told Dr. Bhupendranath Dutt, '... This flag was borne in demonstrations in the streets of Calcutta till 1911. It w'nt out of use after the annulment of the Partition of Bengal' (op. cit., p. 226).

Sukumar Mitra, the designer of this flag, died year before last at the age of eightynine. When I met him a few months before his death he still had a clear memory. He told me that while designing the Indian flag they had been inspired by the flag of the French Revolution and that is why they had made it tri-colour. The flag that he had made with his own hands had seven lotuses indicating the seven Indian provinces on the red strip, the yellow strip in the middle had 'Bande Mataram' inscribed on it in Devanagari, and a moon, as symbols of the Hindu and the Muslim communities.

Further evidence in the matter is available in a reported interview between Sudhir Chandra Banerjee (of the Haldar family of Kalighat, a member of the Brahmo Samaj and a Congressman), also associated with designing the flag, and Dr. Bhupendranath Dutt ; ' When the author asked him

whether the flag was derived from the tricolor of the French Revolution, he said, "Yes, we had ourselves accepted the values associated with the French tricolour, but in public we explained our adoption of the design as symbolising the multinational character of India" (Dutt, Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram ; p. 229).

Dutt tells us, ' The organs of the Extremists of the day and all those who opposed Sir Surendranath ridiculed the ceremony connected with the adoption of the new flag. We alone supported it in our Yugantar. We said, We accept it as the flag of the national revolution". According to Sukumar Mitra, only Sanjibani and Bande Mataram in English reported the ceremony objectively. He admits that Yugantar was the only newspaper to greet the new flag (op. cit., p. 226).

Dr. Dutt, who edited the Yugantar, writes elsewhere : ' When the newspapers opposed to Surendranath Banerjee ridiculed the ceremony of the flag on August 7, the present author greeted the flag as a symbol of equality, fraternity and liberty. Those were, indeed, days of all days : (op. cit., p. 229-30).

While a section of the people of the country ridiculed the move for a national flag, veteran moderates like Surendranath Banerjee, Ghaznavi, and Ashu Chowdhury, accepted the flag as a symbol of the country's aspiration for home rule while young revolutionaries, like Sukumar Mitra, Bhupendranath Dutt, and Sudhir Banerjee read into it a dream of an Indian revolution inspired by the French Revolution and leading to the independence of India. But even while recognizing the revolutionary implications of the new flag at heart, the younger ones made public avowals of their support to the more communal interpretation of the design put up by the elder leaders.

There is, here, a slight confusion over a number. The account in the Sanjivani, which, according to Sukumar Mitra, is the accurate one, gives the number of the lotuses as eight, not seven. This is probably correct. The suggestion for the lotus can be traced back to Rajnarain Bose's earlier proposal in his Briddha Hindur Asha'. For sister Nivedita's suggestion in the Modern Review, for a flag with the lightning and the lotus as symbols of the soul of India is of a much later date.

Meanwhile, there had also been some significant developments abroad. Bhikaji Rustam Cama, the well known Indian revolutionary leader, had raised a national flag at the Stuttgart Congress of the Socialist International in August, 1907. Our Flag, published by the Publication Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, says : Madam Cama and her revolutionary compatriots raised the flag in Paris in 1907 (according to some, in 1905). It has almost identical with the first flag ; only the top patch had a lotus and seven stars symbolizing the seven rishis (a footnote comments : 'This is controversial, for there is no definite information about the lotus in the design'). The flag was unfurled at a Socialist Conference in Barlin.' (P.1).

This pamphlet published by the Government of India contains a number of inaccuracies. For Madam Cama raised the flag for the first time, definitely, at the Seventh Congress of the Second International, held in August, 1907 (not in 1905), at Stuttgart, and not at any Socialist conference held either in Paris or in Berlin. Raising the flag at Stuttgart Madam Cama saluted it and then moved the following resolution : 'That the continuance of British rule in India is positively disastrous and extremely injurious to the best interest of India, and lovers of

freedom all over the world ought to co-operate in freeing from slavery the fifth of the whole human race inhabiting that oppressed country, since the perfect social state demands that no people should be subject to any despotic or tyrannical form of government : (Dr. Abinas Chandra Bhattacharya. Europe—Bharatiya Biplaber Sadhana p-63).

The Stuttgart Congress was attended by, among others, Lenin, Litvinoff, Lunacharsky, Karl Liebknecht Rosa Luxemburg, Bebel, Kautsky, Jaures and other leaders who were instrumental in getting the Congress accept the main point of the resolution despite bitter resistance from opportunist labour leaders like Ramsay Macdonald. Previous to that they had also been instrumental in making it possible for Madam Cama and her fellow Indian delegate—Sardar Singh Raoji Rana, to attend the Congress all inspite of opposition from men like Macdonald Karl Kautsky later recalled the occasion and told Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta : 'I remember an Indian lady moving a flag' (Dutta, Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram, p. 227).

The words of the resolution moved by Madam Cama, the ideas underlying it, the personality of Madam Cama herself and her political views are enough to establish the fact that to Madam Cama and the Indian revolutionaries abroad the flag was a definite symbol of independent India. Another revolutionary from Bengal, Hem Chandra Kanungo who was, at that time, in Paris describes the flag in his Bangla-ey Biplab Prache-sta : 'Red, saffron, and blue, the three colours came in that order. The red at the top, with eight half-open white lotuses, the saffron at the centre with "Bande Mataram" in Devanagiri inscribed upon it, the blue at the bottom, with a sun on one side, and a half-moon and a star on the other'. (p. 205)

Dr. Abinas Chandra Bhattacharya writes in his book, referred to earlier, 'Madam Cama hoisted the flag that she had designed much earlier and had made with her own hand.' (op. cit, p. 63). Dr. Bhattacharya's book has been for me a source of many fresh interesting and accurate pieces of information, but this particular information is not correct. Madam Cama might have had the idea of a national flag as a symbol of independent India. But the design of the flag was not her own ; the flag hoisted at the Stuttgart Congress was not made with her own hands either. Before his return to the country, Dr. Dutta, too, probably shared at least partially, Dr. Bhattacharya's idea in this regard. But when he asked Hem Chandra Kanungo about this on his return to India, Kanungo wrote to him in a letter, 'In my book (i. e. Bangla-ey Biplab Pracheshta) I have not claimed credit as the designer of the national flag, though I had made it, entirely by myself' (Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram, p. 222). Kanungo tells us in his book that he had made the flag in Paris for Madam Cama, when she was going to attend the Stuttgart Congress.

Mahabhandhu Kanungo, son of Hem Chandra, writes to me in a letter, 'My father had made the First Indian National flag on the advice of Madam Cama, Shyamji Karishnavarma, and others'. Kanungo was a competent artist and photographer, and it is only too likely that the assignment of making the flag had been entrusted to him. But did the design originate with Madam Cama, though she herself might not have made this first flag with her own hands ?

Hemchandra Kanungo had written to Dr. Dutta : ' When Savarkar gave his interpretation of the flower (the lotus), the sun, the moon, etc. on the flag, for a newspaper in Bombay ;

he denied the moon was a Muslim symbol. He also claimed that he had himself designed the flag...The design of the flag, was not mine; in fact, I opposed it; in particular, I had strong objections to the inscription of "Bande Mataram" at the centre'.
(Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram, p. 222)

Kanungo here does not clearly support or reject Savarkar's claim that he had designed the flag—all that he affirms is that he himself had not designed it. What appears, however, to be the case, is that the flag had been designed neither by Savarkar nor by Madam Cama at Stuttgart and the flag used in Calcutta during the Swadeshi upsurge the year before, are strikingly similar. They are both tri-colour, both have red at the top with the eight lotuses; the Calcutta flag had 'Vande Mataram' in Devanagri on a yellow ground, while the Paris flag had it on saffron base. While the Calcutta flag had the sun and the moon on a green panel at the bottom, the Paris flag had the same symbols (with a star added) on a blue background.

Such close similarity cannot be just a coincidence. And since the flag had been hoisted in Calcutta on August 7, 1906, and the other flag at Stuttgart a year later (August 1907), it is quite likely that a specimen of the Calcutta flag had reached the Indian revolutionaries abroad in the meantime, and that Hem Chandra Kanungo had designed the second flag on the basis of that flag on the eve of the Stuttgart Congress. The slight difference in the colour scheme—the substitution of yellow by saffron—may have been just a matter of confusion.

Sukumar Mitra told me that one of the young revolutionaries travelling abroad at the time must have taken a specimen of the Calcutta flag with him. He even mentioned Heramba Lal Gupta's name in this connection, though he was not

absolutely certain about it. I do not know when Gupta left the country, so it is difficult to say whether he had been responsible for the transmission of the design to the Indian revolutionaries abroad.

Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta however refers very definitely to another revolutionary in this connection. Khansi Rao, brother of Madho Rao, a General of Baroda State Army, had gone to Switzerland for military training, and had met there the Bangali revolutionary—Hem Chandra Kanungo. Dr. Dutta writes : 'He (that is, Khansi Rao) had carried with him a small specimen of the tricolour national flag adopted by the Bengal Congress in 1907. (Bharater Dwitiya Swadhinata Sangram, p. 155). This, at last, gives us definitely clue as to the transmission of the Calcutta flag to Paris that is, via Khansi Rao via Hem Chandra.

Madam Cama used to have a picture of the flag on the cover of her journal—the Talwar. When she spoke at the 'Indian House' in London or elsewhere, she used to refer to this flag thus : 'This is the flag for which Khudiram and Prafulla Chaki died'. Dr. Dutta writes : 'This is the reason why the author was never in doubt that the flag adopted by the Bengal Congress had become the flag of the revolutionaries in Paris' (op. cit., p. 227).

There was a later phase in the relation between the Indian revolutionaries abroad and this flag or a variant of it later. The Indian Independence committee, set up by Indian revolutionaries in Berlin, soon after the outbreak of the World war I (usually known as the 'Berlin Committee') adopted the same flag, with some modifications of course. Dr. Dutta writes : 'The author reached Berlin on the eve of summer 1915, after travelling through many countries in disguise, and saw the flag in the

office of the 'Berlin Committee'. It was a plain tricolour with the same colour composition. When the author asked Virendra-nath Chattopadhyay said, 'Those were Madam Cama's creations, we have dropped them'. (op. cit. pp. 227-8).

Dr. Dutta writes that this was the flag that he had pointed out to his German colleague, Vincent Krafft and had said : 'Many have given their lives for this flag' to which Krafft replied : 'And many more will do so yet'. Dr. Dutta comments : The author said these words under the impression that the Berlin flag was only a variant of the flag hoisted in Calcutta on August 7'.

According to Dr. Dutta, the flag was not used widely in public at the time, but 'When the 'Berlin Committee' set up a volunteer force in Mesopotamia, with deserters and prisoners from the British Indian army along with some Ghadar revolutionaries, this force came to use the flag. Kartarmji, a former member of the 'Berlin Committee', told a journalist in Jamshedpur in 1948 that he had 'Berlin Committee' flag with him still. He is no longer alive, but the flag may still be lying with his son'. (op. cit., pp. 228-9).

It is also interesting to note here that the wellknown Ghadar party, too, used to hoist a flag with the same colour composition—red on top, yellow in the middle and green below with a pair of crossed swords in the middle. This, too, is a variant of the flag used during the Swadeshi days.

While the Indian revolutionaries abroad were thus using the tri-colour flag, Annie Besant had set up in India in 1916 the Home Rule League and was trying to introduce, in this connection, another national flag. It had five red and four green strips arranged diagonally. It had seven stars like those on the Great

Bear, and a Union Jack on the top left corner towards the flag-staff. It had a white half-moon and a star at the other corner. (our flag, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Government of India pp. 1-2). The maker of this flag had obviously Dominion status or Home Rule in her mind and not complete Independence. However a flag with Union Jack on it at one corner naturally did not find a place in the heart of our people fast moving towards a more radical political stand.

At the Vijayawada session of the All India Congress Committee, in April, 1921, a young man from Andhra placed a proposal for a flag before Gandhiji. It was a bicolour flag with red for the Hindus, and green for the Muslims, Gandhiji suggested in addition a white strip for all the other religious communities in India and a Charkha at the centre. This tricolour, though not officially adopted by the Congress, came to be used on various occasions, thanks to Gandhiji's support.

Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee writes that in December, 1924, on the eve of the Belgaon session of the Congress, Dwijendra Nath Tagore, C. F. Andrews and a few others had written a letter to Gandhiji from Santiniketan, asking him to add saffron to the national flag as a symbol of the ideal of vairagya. ('The National Flag', Modern Review, June 1931, p. 684).

In the meantime the white, green and red tricolour, with the charkha, had become quite popular, especially in the Congress circles. This was the flag that was hoisted at midnight on December 31, 1929, at the Lahore session of the Congress, on adoption of the resolution for independence, and all over the country on January 26, 1930 on our first Independence Day. The flag was in use during the historic Dandi March, at the

Salt campaign at Dharsana, and during the Civil Disobedience Movement in Peshawar, Sholapur, Chittagong, Bombay and other places.

But the communal interpretation of the flag created new problems. The Sikhs said that they were not prepared to accept the white strip as a symbol for all the other communities, while the red and the white were reserved for the Hindus and the Muslims. In that case they, two, wanted a separate colour for themselves. They could accept the flag as it was—only if the colours were regarded as symbols of national ideals rather than of particular communities.

A National Flag Committee was, therefore, set up to resolve the controversies in April 1931, at the Karachi session of the Congress. The Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Pattabi Sitaramayya circulated a questionnaire to Congress at various levels to different organizations, and the people in general. Many individuals and organizations sent replies. Dr. Sunil Kumar Chatterjee and Dr. Kalidas Nag were abroad at the time. They discussed the issue between themselves and Dr. Chatterjee wrote the article, referred to earlier, for the Modern Review, on the basis of these discussions. The article protested against the communal interpretation of the colours of the flag, and asked the Congress authorities to consider if the tricolour could be made into a fourcolour flag.

The National Flag Committee took into account all these opinions and recommended a new flag with a reddish almond charkha on a light green base. But the All India Congress Committee did not accept their recommended and decided at the session of August 6-8, 1931 that the National Flag shall be three-coloured horizontally arranged as before, but the colours shall be saffron, white and green, in the order stated here

from top to bottom. with the spinning wheel in dark blue in the centre of the white strips, the colours standing for qualities, not communities. The saffron shall represent courage and sacrifice, white peace and truth, and green shall represent faith and chivalry and the spinning wheel the hope of the masses. The proportions of the flag should be as three to two', ('The History of the Congress'—Dr. Pattabhi Sittaramayya, Vol. 1, 1935, pp. 811-12).

Matangini Hazra and many martyrs all over the country. It is for the honour of this flag, adopted by the Congress that laid down their lives during the 'Quit India' movement of 1942. Subhas Chandra Bose's Azad Hind Government and the Indian National Army also adopted the same design minus the Charkha. The Indian Constituent Assembly, too, adopted the same flag as the national flag of Independent India on July 22, 1947, with a minor change—the Charkha giving way to the Ashokan Dharmachakra with twenty-four spokes. On August 15, 1947 this flag was hoisted in Delhi and all over the country. While this is the flag now officially used as the National Flag and hoisted ceremonially on August 15 and January 26 every year, the old saffron-white-green tricolour with the Charkha on it, has now become the flag of the Indian National Congress.

The history of the Indian National flag thus shows a thread of continuity in spite of many changes and developments. And it also bears the impress of the **Moderates**, the **Extremists**, the **Revolutionaries** and the **Gandhijes**—those within the country as also those abroad at various stages of our national movement. Our national flag is thus the product of our national mind evolving through a tempestuous history, and hears a sanctity from all its past rich associations.

(From **Russ Biplav O Pravasi Bharatiya Biplavi**—Chinmohan Sehanavis, **Manisha Granthalaya, Calcutta**, pp. 279-'92).

Our Battle

Calcutta University National Integration Council (Centre) earlier in a working group meeting held on 17th June, 1985, decided to embark on the given priorities to undertake the following programme with a special target on the maximum orientation, relating to National Integration Thrust areas were :

- 1) Teachers of all categories specially in rural areas,
- 2) Social workers in rural areas.
- 3) Muslims and Harijans both in urban and rural areas.

Accordingly we organised (a) Educational Camps and Workshops, (b) Cultural programme, generating patriotic perception, (c) Film Show and (d) Exhibition on Freedom Struggle.

Collaborative effort

Amongst the varied collaborative efforts, the most outstanding development was the initiation of a new movement concerning the erosion of human values—values which are universal and permanent ingredients of human culture, as an integral part of world community - consciousness.

More than 30 seminars and 50 group meetings were held—the leading figures being Prabir Sengupta, Professor Subodh Dasgupta, Kali Choudhury, Prof. Jyotirmay Biswas, Asoke Ghosh, & Sandhya Ghosh etc. Many elderly guardians and citizens of North Calcutta have volunteered their services for the common cause of fighting anti-social communal elements.

(2) Second innovative experiment, the centre initiated from the autumn of last year (1985) was the opening of Indian Language classes—Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil and Oriya. This endeavour itself has generated considerable enthusiasm. A new allied organisation under the name, Bhasha Sanhati Parishad (Language and Solidarity Council) was helped to be born, as far as we can, to organise exhibition and seminars.

(3) Third undertaking which we are still continuing, from our own meagre resources, is the collection and replenishing data-bank on Freedom Struggle for the last five years, we have prepared a calender on Freedom Struggle and list of martyrs on Freedom Struggle—to be circulated in schools and clubs.

(4) Four Sustained Campaign

Besides many issues and events, we have so far concentrated on sustained campaign centering round 4 historical events.

(1) Independence Week (August)

(2) Gandhi Jayanti (October)

(3) Nehru Indira Jayanti (November)

(4) Netaji Jayanti (January)

Our Problems

We failed to draw bulk of the student community, who are sharply divided politicised and polarised in political parties. By and large these parties with their frontal organisations are averse to co-operate in a joint and collective campaign for the promotion of the cause of National unity. Often when some of the leaders were persuaded to speak, they harp by and large more on the areas and issues of disagreement, and their approaches to the problem of building up united front are more or less partisan. Of course there are few exceptions who are trying to

focus the problems with remarkable flexibility and patience.

(2) A major chunk of the student community in the Medical and Technical University or Institutes the West Bengal and also in other states, are less interested on issues and problems of national importance and do not consider deeply, the interconnection of local national and international issues, as an interlinked indivisible process. The perception of national and world view is generally lacking, although there are exceptions. There should be an indepth trend study on the attitudinal bias of our future citizens in schools and colleges and their leaders also—the teaching community.

(3) University Grants Commission probably is too engrossed with other important problems than this one. I have drawn the attention of Ministry of Education in the Sub-Committee on several occasions. It should receive top priority of Standing Committee of the NIC to consider the mental health of our younger generation, who forms backbone of the nation, spread over in various sensitive sectors. A study pannel should be formed and sent to five typical zonal area as in the case of study of 1976 with the object of identifying the impediments to promote the healthy feeling of Indian nationalism - that emerged out of more than a Century of Freedom Struggle and gigantic technological revolution in post independence era.



**MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF CUNIC TO PROMOTE NATIONAL
INTEGRATION DURING THE YEAR 1985, 1ST APRIL TO
1986, 31ST MARCH.**

- 11th April** Seminar in memory of Zaki Anwar who laid down his life on 11th April, 1979, in Jamshedpur to save his Hindu brethren.
- 13th April** National Integration Education Camp at Shalkia Hindu School, Howrah—2.00 P. M.
- 22nd April** National Integration Conference at Domjur Nehru Balika Vidyalay—2.00 P. M.
- 11th May** Rabindra Nazrul Jayanti at Carmichael (Muslims) Students Hostel, with cultural function.

Independence week 9th August to 15th August

- 9th August** Seminar on the nature of popular participation in 42, Quit India Movement at CUNIC Centre.
- 10th August** Seminar on the anti-fascist movement and Indian National Congress in memory of M. N. Roy.
- 11th August** National Education Camp in memory of Shahid Khudiram Bose.
- 12th August** Seminar in memory of Madam Cama, on the role of women in Freedom movement at Womens' College.
- 13th August** Seminar in memory of Biplabi Rashbehari and Bagha Jatin on Agniyug in Freedom movement.



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- 14th August Seminar on Harijan and Freedom movement at Ravidas Ekata Vidyalay.
- 15th August Reception to Freedom Fighters at Flag hoisting Ceremony Smt. Kumudini Dakui, Smt. Jyoti Chakrabarty, Sri Madhusudan Banerjee

(Gandhi Jayanti (1st October to 3rd October)

Seminar on Muslim Personal Law—Shah Banu case and the problem of National Integration.

Speakers—Dr. Sultana Salekh

Dr. Hoshenure Rahman

Observance of 31st October

National Symposium on Indira Gandhi martyrdom.

- 14th November Nehru's Birth Day—Exhibition at Rural area at Kalikapur.

19th November Indira Gandhi Birth Day

An Exhibition on the life of Indira Gandhi was organised at CUNIC Centre

- 10th January Seminar on Swami Vivekananda and Youth

National Integration Week (23rd January to 29th January)

at Mahishadal ; Midnapore, Bongao : 24 Parganas (N), Kalikapur

- 30th January Exhibition of National martyrs at CUNIC, Centre.

to

3rd February

- 19th February '86 Teachers' National Integration Workshop at Bongao in memory of RIN Mutiny Day (Rural Programme)



21st February '86 Cultural Programme—the martyrdom of Rafique Barkat, Jabbar in Language movement (Bengali)

24 th February '86 National Integration activist meet, to face communal tension in Calcutta due to the impact of Ram Janam Bhumi and Babri Mazjid issues, on 21st February evening.

22nd and 23rd March '86 in memory of **Shahid Bhagat Singh** National Integration Workshop at Darbhanga Hall—10 to 6 P. M. School Programme in collaboration with forum to fight for restoration of Human Values.

Release of the book—National Unity (No. 2)

by Dr. D. K. Sinha—Pro-Vice-Chancellor,
Calcutta University.

(1) Centre also initiated and collaborated with the allied organisations like (1) Bhasha Sanghati Parishad, (2) J. M. Sin-gupta Centenary Committee, (3) Biplabi Rash Behari Cen-tenary Committee, (4) Forum to fight for Human values, (5) Paschim Banga Sankha Laghu Parishad, (6) The Council for National Integration and Democratic Rights, (7) Swami Prajnananda Smriti Raksha Committee, (8) Institution of Historical Study, (9) Prof. Niharranjan Ray Centre for National Integration, (10) Muslim Institute, (11) Sindhi Youth Association, (12) Chattagram Biplab Tirtha, (13) Sanskriti Chakra, (14) Calcutta Khilafat Committee, (15) National Forum, (16) Anushilan Bhavan and (17) Jugantar Sammilani, etc. in different promotional activities spreading the message of communal Harmony, composite culture and universal human values.



**Dr. Nemai Sadhan Bose : Dr. Subhas Bandopadhyay
Dr. Hiralal Chopra in Punjab Day, 23rd March, 1985**



**Dr. Balwant Singh : Speaking on Punjab Situation
on Bhagat Singh Day. 23rd March, 1985**



31st Jan. 1985, Dr. Phulrenu Guha. Addressing National Symposium.



Bhagat Singh Day, 23rd March, 1985



National Symposium on Indira Gandhi's martyrdom.
31st Oct. 1985.



Sri Jatin Chakravarti, Minister, West Bengal inaugurating
Punjab Day.



Reception to Freedom Fighter : Kumudini Dakua
15th August, 1985



24th January 1985, Blood Donation Camp in Calcutta
University Foundation Day.



Exhibition on National martyrs, 1985. inaugurated by
 Prof. P. K. Mukherjee, Pro V. C.,
 Smt. Kalpana Joshi—Chief Guest



National martyrs Day at College Square : Dr. K. P. Ghosh
 and Nemai Chakravarty (National Teacher Hare School)